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Opinion: Oregon already feels climate change, don't make it worse with Jordan Cove

By [Guest Columnist](#)
Tim Palmer

The fate of the largest fossil fuel project in Oregon history and the largest statewide source of carbon pollution is again on the table at Jordan Cove in Coos Bay. There, a Canadian corporation proposes a massive fossil fuel facility and 232-mile pipeline to serve supertankers filled with American gas bound for Asia.

Meanwhile we have growing urgency about the climate crisis and its principal cause: fossil fuel.

For three months this year, Oregonians choked on wildfire owing to global warming. Worldwide heat waves in 2017 cost businesses 153 billion hours of labor. Floods and hurricanes are intensifying.

Sea level will rise, and who in Oregon cannot care about the 363 miles of our coastline with tides fingering up the Columbia and on through Portland? The oceans are acidifying, which endangers our way of life along the shore. The Cascade Mountains' snowpack is dwindling, and with it go the water supplies of cities, farms and fish. The International Panel on Climate Change's 2018 report alarmed the world, and in November our own government's National Climate Assessment stressed an unprecedented call for remedial action.

Virtually every other nation and a majority of Americans know we must take decisive steps against global warming if we're to leave an inhabitable planet to the children we love. Frustration at President Donald Trump's know-nothing denial and the power of fossil fuel apologists from the Interior Secretary on down is palpable among many Oregonians, including political leaders. And yet elected and appointed officials remain silent while our state teeters on the decision to allow the greatest contributor to climate change in Oregon history to stagger onward.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission -- puppeteered by Trump and his fossil fuel cronies -- is not the only checkpoint for this kingpin contributor to climate change. Within two months, the Oregon Department of State Lands will also determine whether or not the Jordan Cove facility will relegate whole generations to even worse global warming.

To do so is unconscionable in a world of rational thought and responsibility. And none of this recognizes the various other valid reasons for alarm with Jordan Cove: buying and

condemning private property from 700 rural landowners; the dangers of erecting one of the world's most hazardous facilities in a location where a magnitude 9 earthquake and Fukushima-style tsunami are inevitable; and a pipeline where 400 cherished streams and rivers -- many harboring salmon we've worked to restore -- will be threatened.

LNG boosters claim gas is less damaging than coal. But that's a myth. Natural gas is essentially methane, which is 86 times as potent as coal over a 20-year period. Methane routinely leaks from pipelines and gas facilities. To simply equal the harmful effects of coal, leaks must be limited to 2 to 3 percent of the gas supply, but leakage is typically more than that, making gas worse.

Boosters also argue that Jordan Cove will create 146 long-term jobs. For that we would turn our backs on all future generations that will judge *our* generation by whether or not we acted on global warming?

Maybe Coos Bay officials think that 146 local jobs and a local tax revenue boost justifies Jordan Cove's costs to ours and future generations. But the rest of Oregon's public officials have no such excuse for allowing this shortsighted violation of our future to become an excruciating and regretful reality.

-- Tim Palmer lives in Port Orford on Oregon's south coast. He is the author of 26 books published about natural resources and the environment.

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