

Siting Biosiesel: A Heated Discussion

Email exchanges between Portland, Oregon, City Commissioner Randy Leonard, and Pat Wagner, chair of the Neighborhood Association, regarding the possibility of sighting of a biodiesel refinery inside city limits. The neighborhood of Linnton was recently denied a zoning change to allow more residential housing in the designated “industrial sanctuary” of Northwest Portland.

From: Pat Wagner
To: Randy Leonard

Commissioner Leonard,
The Linnton Mill is being sold.
A belching biodiesel refinery & tanks will be where “Linnton Village” would have stood.
All because of you.
Please read the links below
Please put this in an industrial area—People live here.
Please remember what you said when you voted against us.

All,
Please read the series of e-mails below. They are a dialogue with City Commissioner Randy Leonard. Please don't let him do this to Linnton. Please start by scrolling to the bottom.
Pat

---From: Pat Wagner
To: Randy Leonard
Subject: RE: FW: RE: please prove me wrong
Date: Thu, 22 Mar 2007 20:03:26 -0700

Commissioner Leonard,

You requested specific locations of Biodiesel refinery explosions & fires. February 7, 2007 -Idaho -Biodiesel plant explosion &- death of a 25 year old—all homes evacuated. February 17, 2007 Bakersfield -civilian death-static electricity cause-total loss
July, 2006 Canby- Sunbreak Biofuels- July 7, 2006 New Plymouth explosion -homes evacuated
June 29, 2006 Austin Texas explosion of barrels

I don't think you would try to dupe us. Your simplistic explanation of biodiesel refineries is absurd.
I don't think your people did their homework.
To produce biodiesel, liquid methanol is brought in by trains or trucks. It is pumped into the refinery's reactor. It then REACTS WITH OIL & THE PRODUCT BECOMES GYCERINE & BIODIESEL. The methanol is the reactant.

The flash point of methanol is 54 degrees fahrenheit biodiesel cannot be put in pipelines unless the pipelines are heated. The Olympic pipeline is not heated and at is capacity. In the words of Troy Buzalsky Canby Fire Dept. “To create the catalyst you must mix sodium hydroxide or potasium hydroxide with methanol—this creates a Methoxide in Methanol solution.” This is highly flammable, reacts violently with water, completely incompatible with water acids and chlorinated solvents. Inhalation is FATAL. iT IS ALSO SUBJECT TO THERMAL RUNAWAY. (the hotter it gets the faster the reaction, the faster the reaction the hotter it gets.) Biodiesel refineries require vapor recovery systems, THE SAME AS ALL INDUSTRIES WITH TOXIC EMISSIONS.

ok Commissioner Leonard, there have been three civilian deaths in a year at these new start-up plants. Compare that to the history of safety in Linnton & in all of the United States with our tank farms.

You were misled. To say we wanted to build houses over active petroleum pipelines is a fib told by unscrupulous people. Linnton asked to opt out of "sanctuary." That is all. In order for NINA to have their land use plan accepted by Council, Linnton had to support it. Linnton did on the condition NINA would support Linnton's Plan. When it was time to live up to their part of the deal NINA just said "we have ours now we want it all". It was passed as a resolution by council when the NINA Plan passed. The sanctuary was supposed to end at the St. Johns Bridge. Our dream of housing was consistent with city, state & national safety & building codes. The only issue was "sanctuary." That was all. Your decision forced a set of standards inconsistent with city policy on Linnton.

Might I remind you that you live right over active gas lines & are over petroleum lines all the time. The same trains that go through Linnton go through downtown.

The Grays Harbor Biodiesel facility "Imperium" plans on producing over 100 million gallons of biodiesel every year. This is the first of three such facilities. This one plant will produce the entire biodiesel needs for one third of the U.S. THEY PLAN ON EMPLOYEING ONLY FIFTY (50) PEOPLE! That does not sound too job intensive to me. This will be the largest facility in the entire nation & it will only employ 50 people! !!!!!

The carrot of "jobs" just does not fly.

Please do not victimize this community by taking one of the few pieces of semi-clean land and polluting it. Please do not put any more toxins in Linnton's air. Please do not expose us to the dangers of an industry that uses dangerous chemicals and are known to blow up, have fires and cause evacuations and deaths. Please do not subject us to the hundreds of tanker trucks and trains full of highly explosive methanol and other chemicals.

Linnton is an old and wonderful community. Please listen to the people. Please do not put us in the position where if there were an accident our loved ones would die. The fumes would go straight up to our houses. You know that. You said it in the Council hearing. You also know fossil fuels would just sink to the river. That is why we are safe now. You know methanol has a cumulative effect in bodies. That is a terrible curse to put on our children.

Put the facility in the desert or in a heavy industrial area far away from homes above it and Forest Park and the river.

PLEASE EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT THIS. YOU ARE LISTENING TO TOO MANY SALESMEN.

Pat Wagner

---From: Randy Leonard

To: Pat Wagner

Subject: RE: please prove me wrong

Date: Tue, 20 Mar 2007 19:06:14 -0700

Pat-

While liquid methanol is used in the process of creating biodiesel from canola oil, it is done in a "closed" process, i.e., all of the fumes are captured and contained.

I would appreciate the specific locations of the examples of the biodiesel refinery explosions you referenced. If you provide me with that information, I will definitely look into that.

The process for making biodiesel is environmentally safe and will be an industry that will create excellent family wage jobs in Linnton on a site that has been zoned for that purpose predating all of us.

I look forward to receiving any more information you may have...Randy

-----Original Message-----

From: Pat Wagner

To: Randy Leonard

Subject: RE: please prove me wrong

Commissioner Leonard,

With all due respect, someone has given you a “sales-job”. Your facts are dead wrong.

Maybe you are as much a victim as we in Linnton.

Please research biodiesel for yourself. Just google it. Call the Port of Grays Harbor. Talk to the man at the Port of Grays Harbor in charge of the new biodiesel refineries that are going in. Educate yourself on biodiesel refineries. Educate yourself on the number of explosions that have occurred at Biodiesel refineries just this year, before they were even operating. A refinery is totally different from storage. The difference between the “protected tanks” in Linnton that store fuel & biodiesel refineries is that our tanks in Linnton are storage only. Refineries are into production. Production uses volatile chemicals and high pressures and produce fumes. The fumes from the production of biodiesel contain Methanol. Methanol is deadly. Methanol goes up. Methanol rises. The fumes would go straight up to the homes on the Linnton hills, depending on which way the wind was blowing.

Fossil fuels sink . If the lids fell off and fumes got away from the tanks that are currently in Linnton they would sink straight down to the river. Linnton tanks do not involve any production at all—only storage, no high pressures. StATISTICALLY TANKS like are in Linnton are as safe as your own bed. Call the NFPA. LOOK AT THE FACTS. Look at the statistics regarding protected tanks.

To lose is never easy. However this is almost too much to stomach. We lost because the opponents hired a public relations firm, brought in a team of attorneys and told lies and spent lots of money.

Please find out the manufacturing process for making biodiesel.

Please research the difference between storage and refining.

The Olympic Pipeline does not cross the mill property. Most of the Kinder Morgan Pipelines are abandoned. Ask the guy that does their maintenance.

Pipelines are the safest way to transport fuels. Pipelines just like in Linnton are all over Portland. Pipelines carrying very volatile gas hook right up to & go under city hall.

Linnton loves the environment,. We like biodiesel. We are against putting a refinery right under people noses. Refineries belong in industrial areas, away from homes, day care centers and restaurants. Linnton is a mixed use community. A refinery belongs in Linnton no more than one belongs in your community or the Pearl. Please do your homework yourself. Someone is letting you down. Your facts are wrong.

The mill site is zoned inappropriately. A mistake was made. Truly honorable men admit mistakes and correct them. I still believe in you. I believe once you know the facts you will help correct the travesty that was com-

mitted on Linnton.

-----From: Randy Leonard
To: Pat Wagner
Subject: RE: please prove me wrong
Date: Tue, 20 Mar 2007 09:05:44 -0700

I hardly know how to respond to you, Pat. It was just a few months ago that you wanted to build houses over an active petroleum pipeline and right next to a petroleum storage facility. It is hard to understand how you can go from saying that would be perfectly safe to saying a biodiesel plant could “kill or poison” you.

In fact, biodiesel production is nothing more than “cooking” canola or soy. The byproducts are separated and the canola oil becomes biodiesel. It is non toxic and, when burned, smells like french fries cooking.

I would never agree to have a business in Portland that could even potentially cause the things you suggest.

Randy

-----Original Message-----

From: Pat Wagner
To: Randy Leonard
Subject: please prove me wrong
Sent: 3/20/2007 7:53 AM

Commissioner Randy Leonard,
Concerning the Oregonian article about biosiesel refinery citing in
Linnton:

You know the fumes from biodiesel refining would kill or poison me, my pets, my family and friends. You know biodiesel refineries are prone to horrific accidents. These refineries are exploding before they are even built. You know the fumes of biodiesel production would go straight up to Linntons homes. I live only a few miles from every site in PDX you & PDC are pushing.

Why would you set a trap to kill me, my friends and my family?

Why would you take one of the few fairly clean riverfront sites in PDX & store chemicals proven worse than used for meth production there?

Why would you kill Linntons dream of riverfront housing when you know the type of tanks we have in Linnton currently are “protected tanks” have a proven track record of safety, and even in the event of an accident the fumes sink. They go to the lowest point. Why did you ignore our state representative, our Metro Councilor & the city fire marshall when they said “give Linnton housing.” Why did you ignore Homer Williams when he promised he would either do the housing or find someone that would?

Why did you say Linnton’s current tanks aren’t safe when you know if there were an accident the fumes would sink to the lowest point—away from where people are? You know a person is more likely to be hit by lightning than hurt by a Linnton tank. When you crushed Linnton’s dreams you said you could not be involved in any decision that might result in an accident, even if the risk is almost zero. I have a hard time believing you would be bought out by big money. Please tell me the Oregonian article was a fabrication by a reporter.

