

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 3, 2017

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. President:

In April, *The Washington Post* reported that members of your administration met with officials from Jordan Cove LNG, a proposed liquid natural gas (LNG) export terminal and transport pipeline, which would be sited in Coos Bay, Oregon. After the meeting, a White House official stated “[T]he first thing we’re going to do is we’re going to permit an LNG export facility in the northwest.” As you should know, the White House is not responsible for permitting natural gas facilities and pipelines – that responsibility rests with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).


FERC is an independent agency charged with permitting future LNG and hydropower projects. In order to properly assess and permit these projects, FERC must determine the public benefit of all proposals. FERC has a longstanding tradition of bipartisanship, and operates under a deliberative process that includes broad stakeholder engagement, thorough consideration of local concerns, and strict adherence to the law. In the interest of local communities affected by these decisions, we strongly urge your administration to avoid any step that could be interpreted as political interference in FERC’s deliberative permitting process in Oregon and nationwide.

Last year, FERC denied Jordan Cove’s application based on a lack of public benefit, primarily because the pipeline’s construction could hurt area landowners through the use of eminent domain. Because construction of these pipelines has significant impacts on property owners – property rights being one of the core rights our Constitution is designed to protect – it is FERC’s job to balance government power against individual rights.

The company has publicly stated its intent to refile its permitting application with FERC. While considerable local support exists for this project, Jordan Cove must demonstrate to FERC that there is credible public interest for granting the project’s necessary permits. Ultimately, FERC’s decision should take into account Jordan Cove’s recent actions to prove its viability and weigh the environmental and property rights concerns of local residents opposed to this proposal.

FERC has a process for permitting energy projects that is specified in the Natural Gas Act, which Congress passed in 1938. These decisions greatly affect local communities and should not be based casually on who occupies the presidency. America is a nation of laws and due process, and we respectfully insist FERC carry out its review of Jordan Cove’s application without political interference from you or those in your administration.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator