

September 21, 2010

Commissioners,

Thanks for this opportunity to express the views of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. I represent some 2,000 concerned Oregon health care professionals. We support Option #3, as it would result in the least pollution and the least expense.

The air pollution emanating from the Boardman plant, nitrous and sulfur oxides and ozone, damages human health by affecting the lungs, heart and the placentas of unborn children, thereby engendering and exacerbating lung and cardiovascular disease, increasing the number of premature births, and all the complications, suffering and costs that these entail.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxides are airway irritants, causing bronchitis and asthma, and contribute to premature birth, among other medical problems. These compounds also combine in the atmosphere to create very harmful micro-particulate pollution. These microparticles adsorb heavy metals, volatile organic compounds, pollutants such as dioxins and allergens, carrying them deep into the body to damage the thin wet surface of the lung, and cross over into the bloodstream to disseminate the pollutants all over the body.

The other pollutants of concern from Boardman are mercury and other heavy metals. Mercury goes into the air, then into the soil and water, into fish and then into people. The top of the food chain is not lions, tigers, or bears. It is the human fetus and child, who when exposed to mercury suffers permanent damage to the nervous and musculoskeletal systems.

Lastly and perhaps more importantly is the impact of this plant on climate change. While controls based on this issue have not yet been promulgated, regulations are being developed. Boardman is the largest single greenhouse gas emitter in Oregon. The health impact of global warming is huge, with rising sea levels, more heat-related deaths, increased levels of ozone pollution, and grave loss of snow pack, diminishing water for drinking and irrigation.

Oregon PSR knows DEQ recognizes the relationship between the environment and human health. Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.

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