



2852 Willamette #125, Eugene, OR 97405 | 541-338-7671 | fusee@fusee.org | www.fusee.org

Firefighters' Group Raises Alarm Over Fire Risks of Jordan Cove Fracked Gas Pipeline

Pipeline Passes Through Areas of High Wildfire Risks, Increases Dangers to Firefighters

EUGENE - Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE) joined hundreds of Oregonians at the state capitol in Salem on Thursday, March 28 to voice concerns to legislators about the increased dangers that the proposed Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) pipeline would pose to wildland firefighters. FUSEE presented legislators with maps showing that the proposed pipeline route would pass through a 100-mile span of forested wildlands known to have very high wildfire risk. An accidental leak or rupture of the pipeline could trigger an explosive ignition of a gas-fueled wildfire that, added to the higher fuel hazards from flammable brush growing in the pipeline's clearcut corridor, could spread fire rapidly through the forest and toward nearby rural communities. Conversely, a forest fire could spread across the pipeline and cause an explosive rupture of the pipeline, endangering any firefighters working in the area.

"Westerners are wising up to the role that electric powerlines play in igniting wildfires, but fracked gas pipelines don't just shoot sparks--they explode in fireballs," said Timothy Ingalsbee, executive director of Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology (FUSEE). "Firefighters will be forced to fight pipeline fires that threaten forests and local communities, and fight forest fires that threaten the pipeline. Either way, the pipeline greatly adds to the complexity and dangers of their mission."

FUSEE presented legislators with maps and a list of potential added fire dangers of the fracked gas pipeline that includes:

- high risk of a pipeline leak or rupture igniting a high-intensity wildfire
- high risk of a wildfire burning across the pipeline and triggering an explosion
- need for constant maintenance of the flammable fuels within the pipeline's clearcut corridor, most likely with chemical herbicides to limit growth of flammable brush
- the fracked gas pipeline will add to global warming, worsening fire risks

The pipeline would pass through over 100 miles of forested wildlands with existing high fire risk. The clearcut corridor for the pipeline will fragment closed-canopy forests and replace the trees with flammable grasses, shrubs, and invasive weeds, turning the pipeline's linear clearcut into a quick-burning fuse if a fire from any source encounters the pipeline pathway.

"Everyone knows you shouldn't add gas to a forest fire, but even if there is never a leak or rupture of the pipeline, the intended purpose of the pipeline is to facilitate more fossil fuel burning. This is driving up global warming and increasing wildfire activity worldwide, raising risks to firefighters and communities living in fire-prone areas," said Timothy Ingalsbee. "The Oregon legislature needs to stand up for wildland firefighters and rural communities to firmly and finally say NO to the Jordan Cove fracked gas pipeline project."

For more information and maps of the pipeline path through high fire risk areas:
<https://www.fusee.org/climate-change/>

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