

Bradbury says LNG is 'dirty'

Secretary of State warns that importing gas is the wrong path for Oregon

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Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury opposes liquefied natural gas development in Oregon. He thinks LNG would take the state "180 degrees in the wrong direction."

Bradbury, who is in his last year of office because of term limits, said such projects would increase Oregon's dependence on fossil fuels just as it's attempting to increase its use of wind and solar energy.

"LNG is a dirty fuel that adds to the greenhouse gases we're putting into the environment," he said.

He expressed his opposition at a global warming forum in Forest Grove Thursday and in an interview with The Oregonian newspaper. He plans to announce his position in more detail at an anti-LNG rally in Salem Wednesday.

Bradbury is the first high-ranking state official to oppose LNG.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski suggests LNG, particularly for a facility proposed for Coos Bay, could be "a bridge" to help the state transition to a renewable future and refuses to take it off the table.

Scott Moore, a spokesman for Bradbury, said any LNG facility built in Oregon is not going to be temporary, and there may be other options for finding an energy bridge that wouldn't involve building an LNG terminal, such as the natural gas pipeline from the Rockies that's in the works.

An LNG terminal is "not going to be a temporary facility," he said. "It's not going to go away once we've managed to comply with our renewable energy standards."

Three companies have proposed building LNG terminals in Oregon: one in Coos Bay and two on the Columbia River. The terminals would accept imports of supercooled natural gas from abroad, reheat the liquid into a gas, and ship the gas to West Coast markets through one of four proposed pipelines that would run through hundreds of miles of farms and forests.

North Coast residents opposed to the development of LNG terminals at Bradwood Landing, 20 miles east of Astoria, and on the Skipanon Peninsula in Warrenton have

repeatedly made arguments similar to Bradbury's at public meetings on LNG development.

"The governor and all of us realize of course that LNG is a foreign fossil fuel," said Astoria resident Peter Huhtala. "The sources for LNG include some of the most unstable regions of the world. LNG is not a bridge to the future, it is a freeway that leads directly to the energy blunders of our past. Just because we dug that hole doesn't mean we need to go back and deliberately fall in it again."

Bradbury, Kulongoski and State Treasurer Randall Edwards hold the three votes on the State Land Board, which may need to approve the use of state lands for any LNG terminal and associated pipelines to carry gas to market.

Supporters of the LNG terminals and pipelines say imports are needed to diversify Oregon's energy sources as supplies tighten. Opponents say Oregon has enough natural gas, and shouldn't bear the environmental burden for facilities that would ship it out of state.

Within Oregon, Bradbury has taken a high-profile role on the issue of global warming. He toured the state to present former Vice President Al Gore's slide show on the subject.

The Hillsboro Argus assisted on this story