



City of Tacoma

Council Member Ryan N. Mello

August 4, 2017

Tacoma City Manager Elizabeth Pauli
747 Market Street, Room 1200
Tacoma, WA 98402

RE: Interim Regulations to prohibit fossil fuel exports and large expansions and other impacts to the community

Dear Madam City Manager,

During the July 18th Council Study Session presentation on interim regulations for the Tideflats, Director Huffman provided an updated calendar for the work that extends the decision until November. Additionally, at the August 2nd Planning Commission meeting, staff presented draft language and a recommendation to move these forward. We appreciate the recommendation to move these forward but remain concerned about how long it is taking and the current scope of the interim regulations being considered.

Timing: At the May 9th City Council meeting where the Council gave direction to move forward with the sub-area planning process and negotiate an associated interlocal agreement with the Port of Tacoma and work with the Planning Commission to *immediately* put in place interim regulations, the Council was assured by the Planning Director that this process to put in place interim regulations would take 2 – 4 months. We are now almost 3 months from that Council meeting. We are concerned with this new proposed timeline and that by taking this amount of time to put in place interim regulations, it leaves the City unnecessarily vulnerable to new proposals that will further complicate our sub-area planning process. This ultimately may cost the City more money in processing new projects that may not fit the long-term vision for the City further complicating the implementation of whatever the vision may be.

The purpose of an interim regulation is to establish a stop-gap measure that then enables the City to go through a more thorough and thoughtful process to identify the vision and planning tools to implement that vision. Interim regulations last for 1 year and then require a re-evaluation and decision by the City Council to determine if anything needs to be changed to account for any unintended consequences. Interim regulations are not the long-term solution to land use planning, but are rather a key tool to address an immediate or emerging issue(s) that hasn't yet been decided through the public planning process.

Scope: New and expanding fossil fuel facility projects are an immediate and emerging issue in Western Washington and Oregon. Incompatible land-uses such as permitting further residential housing so close to the industrial and manufacturing center is another issue that needs a pause so as to not further exacerbate this situation that is causing such friction. These issues require an immediate interim



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regulation that prohibits these facilities until the time when the City can complete its sub-area planning process and adopt land use codes to implement the plan. The current draft includes reference to many other uses that would be banned, including metal recycling. We encourage the planning commission to focus on the urgent threat of fossil fuels.

As a City, we have learned the hard way what happens when we don't act quickly to ensure that we have the right tools and vision in place for making land use decisions and thus we are forced to live with the long-term consequences of development sited that does not comport with our Comprehensive Plan because our land use codes have not had the ability to catch up with our vision.

We request that you expedite the decision-making process with the Commission and schedule a Council Public Hearing and vote in August or early September. This will better comport with the urgency of the situation, protection of a well thought-out sub-area planning process and the assurances given Council on May 9th.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Ryan N. Mello in blue ink.

Ryan N. Mello
Council Member, At-Large

Handwritten signature of Keith Blocker in blue ink.

Keith Blocker
Council Member, District 3

Handwritten signature of Anders Ibsen in blue ink.

Anders Ibsen
Council Member, District 1

Cc:

Planning Director Peter Huffman

Planning Commissioner Chair Chris Beal, Vice Chair Stephen Wamback, and Commissioners Andrew Strobel, Dorian Waller, Brett Santhuff, Jeff McInnis, Anna Peterson, Carolyn Edmonds and Jeremy Woolley