

Diana Richardson

My name is Diana Richardson. I live in part of the territory stolen from the Chinook and Multnomah Peoples upon which their descendants live today.

"To protect, preserve and enhance the environment for future generations." Mission of Washington Department of Ecology

I write to question your assumptions, your basic assumptions, about what is at stake in the decision to permit or not permit this or any project known to contribute to the havoc being rained down on our communities at this very moment.

With catastrophic climate destabilization undeniably linked to fossil fuels, you who are appointed or elected to make choices regarding the health and welfare of the people you are responsible to must accept your moral responsibility to act in a ways that do NO harm, that only protect the ENTIRE environment--from air and water on which we all depend-- to every animal and human on earth. Anything less is blind obedience to cultural biases to which you are accustomed. I refer to the notion that there have to be losses to life in any or all of its forms, justified by allegiance to a habit of accepting there is some value higher than that of preserving and enhancing life. For that is the only way anyone could even entertain the thought of permitting a project which will unquestionably have devastating effects on our lives now and on the generations to succeed us, if indeed, they will even be able to survive.

Your mission states : to "protect, preserve and enhance the environment for future generations"! You must take into account all of the beings who are affected by your actions.

When you think about the "pros and cons" of permitting this methanol project, a calamity for all the people of Kalama, of Washington, Oregon, and far beyond our homes, do you think about the First Nations' People, the people whose humanity has been denied by the continuing colonization the dominating culture imposes, against government law, against moral law, against spiritual law? Or are these lives ignored in the calculations of decision-makers who see the issues from the point of view of What-do-we-need-and-how-do-we-get-it? The point of view of the conquering nation.

We need to acknowledge the truth we do not want to see. Are you not charged with protecting, preserving and enhancing the environment for future generations?

As a woman familiar with the violence perpetrated upon the women of the communities through which the pipelines are laid, I must tell you this, though you will not want to hear it:

There are always the men who are not part of the communities where they are hired to build infrastructure for the substances illegally and immorally ripped from the entrails of our Mother Earth to be extracted for personal profit at the expense of the people.

Numb or dead to their feelings for the life that beats in every human heart, these men act out the brutal rape and pillage of the Earth upon the innocent, unprotected women they can so easily take for their own sad, brutal despair. Do not turn away from this truth: This is what you accept and authorize if you permit this project.

I implore you to find some human feeling in your own heart...a feeling which recognizes the hurt

and pain, the terror and shame of sexual violence from which we women never do recover if our lives are not taken outright.

What is the true price of agreeing to the realization of this project?

I ask you to get out of your head and into your heart. To respond and to act as a real human being. What would that mean for the community you are sworn to serve? What would that mean for you?