I wish to present an Emergency Resolution to the Oregon Nurses Association 2020 House of Delegates.

Covid 19 dominates 2020. Covid 19 has appropriately occupied our primary health and safety concerns. However, global Climate Change remains a looming public health and safety disaster. The American Nurses Association Resolution on Global Climate Change states “the challenges we face as a result of global climate change are unprecedented in human history”. The following Resolution: Opposition to Zenith Energy: Tar Sands Oil Trains and Terminal in Oregon aims to inform ONA members and decision makers of the extreme current and long term health and safety hazards Zenith Energy poses.

Please support this Resolution.

See the following attachments:

Attachment 1 - Request for Emergency Resolution
  2 - Introduction
    3 - Resolution: Opposition to Zenith Energy and Terminal in Oregon
    4 - American Nurses Association 2008 House of Delegates Resolution: Global Climate Change
Introduction
Oregon Nurses Association
2020 House of Delegates
Resolution
Opposition to Zenith Energy: Tar Sands Oil Trains and Terminal in Oregon

Worldwide citizens are in the midst of a global Climate Emergency. All efforts must be aimed at solutions to avert raising atmospheric CO2 levels from the burning of fossil fuels. Zenith Energy is a fossil fuel company based in Texas and is using NW Portland Oregon as a railway hub to send the most toxic, explosive crude tar sands oil (with additional risks from hydrogen sulfide (H2S) via tankers to refineries in Alaska, Washington, and California. Zenith presents multiple environmental health and safety risks to our city. Zenith currently poses risks from mile long diesel-powered trains emitting known carcinogenetic air pollutants, as well as, risks from derailments, fire and explosion.

Please consider the following Resolution to inform our members and thank leaders in advocating and protecting our region and citizens from these local public health safety risks and the looming Climate Emergency.

Patricia Bellamy, RN Retired
Marilee Dea, RN, PNP Retired

Resources:

1) American Nurses 2008 House of Delegates Resolution on Climate Change.
Recommended Actions:

Send letters of thanks to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty, and Interim Director Elisabeth Perez, Office for Community Technology, for their decisions to deny permits for the expansion of Zenith Energy’s facilities, as well as, ONA’s support for fuising requirements for strict air quality monitoring and enforcement, emergency preparedness for: fire, explosions, spills and natural disasters (flooding, earthquakes).

Send letters to Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Commissioners Dr. Sharon Meieran, Susheela Jayapal, Jessica Vega Pederson and Lori Stegmann, thanking them for their wise decision to institute Risk Bonds for the Zenith project in Multnomah County with recommendation that Risk Bonds cover the full costs of a potential disaster. Additionally, ONA supports a mandate for seismic retrofits for chemical and fossil fuel terminals at the Critical Infrastructure Energy Hub (CIEH).

Whereas, The Oregon Nurses Association, in keeping with the American Nurses Associations Resolution on Global Climate Change, recognizes the massive threat of human health and safety from global climate change. The Zenith tar sands oil terminal originates at the Alberta Tar Sands operation, sited as the most carbon intensive and destructive industrial projects on earth and one of the largest threats to our climate.

Whereas, rail accidents are common. 27 rail accidents occurred in Multnomah County between 2013 and 2016. Transporting crude oil by rail amplifies the potential for oil train accident calamities involving fires, explosions, contamination and death, examples are the 2013 train derailment accident in Lac Megantic, Quebec where 47 lost their lives and Mosier, Oregon in 2016 where a crude oil train derailed and caught fire near the school releasing toxic fumes, smoke, fire and contamination to the Columbia River.

Whereas, the Zenith trains will travel through the fragile Columbia Gorge and then pass through Portland. A quarter of Multnomah county residents live within 1/2 mile of the train tracks, an area called the “Blast Zone”, it is also an area inhabited by a disproportionate number of people of color. If a Zenith crude oil train derails it could endanger our rivers, parks and forests, schools and the people of our state.

Whereas, the air quality is poor in Portland, with one of the highest rates of asthma in the country. The increased train traffic in our neighborhoods is a significant contributor to diesel pollution and increases harm to young children and the fragile elderly.

Whereas, Multnomah County found first responders are neither well trained nor equipped to respond to and contain a crude oil spill and the catastrophic consequences of a derailment fire, a terminal or marine explosive accident.

Whereas, the Zenith terminal is located by the St Johns Bridge in an industrial zone in a region that is high risk for ground liquefaction and terminal destruction in an earthquake. Thus, it threatens us with catastrophic and irrevocable pollution to our air, land and from Willamette River to the Pacific Ocean.

Whereas, a spill from tanker trains contains high concentrates of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) that cause genetic damage, birth defects, hormonal destruction, developmental disorders, kidney and liver damage.

Whereas, the public health impacts of this oil transport are numerous and profound, becoming a crude oil export terminal is contrary to the city and states interest and climate goals; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Oregon Nurses Association recognizes and publicly acknowledges that Zenith Energy poses a serious public health and safety risk to Portland Oregon; and it be further

Resolved, that the Oregon Nurses Association requests the Portland Mayor and City Commissioners deny any and all further expansion/construction permits for Zenith Energy and assure enforcement of Zenith Energy’s strict air quality monitoring and enforcement, emergency preparedness for: fire, explosions, spills and natural disasters (flooding, earthquakes).
American Nurses Association
2008 House of Delegates

Resolution

Global Climate Change

WHEREAS, ANA has long partnered with environmental agencies and groups such as Healthcare Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth (formerly Hospitals for a Healthy Environment), US Environmental Protection Agency and the University of Maryland, and collaborated on projects such as the Luminary Project and RN no Harm; and

WHEREAS, some of ANA’s constituent member associations have developed their own environmental task forces, which acknowledges ANA and the CMA’s commitment to the environment and addressing environmentally related health concerns and their impact on the nursing profession; and

WHEREAS, the ANA has been a leader in the formation of public policy that affects human health and patient advocacy and has adopted a Precautionary Approach which mandates action to counteract potential threats to human health; and

WHEREAS, current scientific evidence research conducted by health institutes, environmental groups, higher education institutes and the US government clearly documents the threats posed by global climate change on a massive human and environmental scale; and

WHEREAS, “the American Nurses Association (ANA) exists to promote the health of the public and advance the nursing profession through the development and support of prevention programs” (ANA, 2001, 23). Nurses have the responsibility to be aware of broader health concerns such as environmental pollution; and

WHEREAS, the ANA and its constituent member associations have an obligation to take action to influence public policy on global climate health threats and to develop and support programs that would allow and encourage nurses to have an impact in the global health environment; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association recognizes and publicly acknowledges that the challenges we face as a result of global climate change are unprecedented in human history and it is critical that nurses speak out in a united voice and advocate for change on both individual and policy levels; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association encourages constituent member associations to support local public policies that endorse sustainable energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association supports initiatives to decrease the contribution to global warming by the healthcare industry.