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Judge sides with port in environmental policy suit

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A ruling on Friday from the Clark County Superior Court will allow the proposed oil export terminal at the Port of Vancouver to move forward in its environmental review process.

Judge David E. Gregerson today ruled that the port did not violate the state's Environmental Policy Act when it approved a 42-acre lease for the Tesoro-Savage project, as alleged by



a number of environmental organizations. The judge also ruled against the plaintiffs' request for injunctive relief.

"We are pleased with the result of the judge's ruling," said Port Executive Director Todd Coleman in a press release. "We look forward to continuing our efforts to create a prosperous Clark County in a responsible and sustainable manner. The port will continue to work collaboratively with the environmental community and other stakeholders as the Tesoro-Savage project is reviewed by EFSEC and Governor Inslee."

While the project is able to move forward, Judge Gregerson did grant the plaintiffs' request for limited discovery regarding their claim that the port violated the Open Public Meetings Act on July 22nd. This allows the plaintiffs to pursue additional evidence.

"We intend to work with the plaintiffs to provide the necessary information in an efficient manner," said the port's attorney Lawson Fite of the Markowitz, Herbold, Glade & Mehlhaf firm.

The case was filed in October 2013 against the port by Columbia Riverkeeper, the Sierra Club and the Northwest Environmental Defense Center. Initially, the suit alleged that the port violated the Open Public Meetings Act during a July meeting of port commissioners regarding the lease to Tesoro Corp. Later, the suit was expanded to include the plaintiffs' claim that the port failed to follow the State Environmental Policy Act during the lease approval process.

Image is of the July 22 workshop at the Port of Vancouver. Photo courtesy Port of Vancouver USA.



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