

From: Priscilla Lowery <jpcilla@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, January 16, 2022 10:35 AM
To: ePermits - Planning <planning@columbiacountyor.gov>
Subject: comments on Industrial Project Plan near Great Vow



January 16, 2022

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed industrial development of the lands below Great Vow Monastery. The investors Efirdt and Soumas have a record of business dealings that lack integrity, sustainability of land, destruction of habitat, and no vision for quality water usage for the future. Ultimately these men support business practices that are not in alignment with keeping Oregon beautiful and healthy for both people and wildlife.

My family heritage extends back before statehood from both Native American ancestry and early pioneer ancestry. I care deeply about the preservation of our precious Columbia River and proper land use. I realize that small communities like Clatskanie are vulnerable to such business corporations and that these types of businesses provide potential employment and revenue for the community, but I believe that supporting this business is a move in the wrong direction. I grew up on the Southern Oregon Coast in Oregon's Curry county, one of the poorest counties in Oregon, so I truly understand the temptation and pressure that a community can be under when such business dealings arrive. However, there is nothing more short sighted than undervaluing the natural resources and the potential degradation that such a facility will bring—Oregon is littered already with such hollow and destructive ventures. I encourage you to only allow businesses that truly demonstrate a value for a sustainable future and companies that want to work as good neighbors to develop in your community. Please seek businesses that truly care about the environment and the hearts of the people that live and grow there.

You have such a valuable community member in Great Vow Monastery. I found myself in need of the spiritual solace and support that Great Vow provides several years ago when I experienced an emotional crisis that was rooted in my early childhood abuse and trauma. Zen Master Chozen Bays dedicated her life as a pediatrician to abused children; many of whom sadly did not survive their abuse. Her heart was so tender and she suffered greatly in service to these children and then dedicated herself to the peaceful teachings of the Zen tradition. Great Vow is a sacred space of sanctuary for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones or seeking spiritual guidance in this world of increasing division and suffering. When I was a practicing Quaker, I took great solace in a 4 day silent meditation retreat that they provided. Walking the beautiful land and connecting with God helped me move through a very difficult time in my life. It was on that land that I reconnected with my vow to serve others with love and took some steps forward in my healing journey. I want to share that while I was there, a blind man was also in attendance. His daughter made it possible for him to navigate all the sit sessions and teachings. He was healing from trauma and I witnessed a profound transformation occur in this man as he grieved. I am certain that there are countless stories of how the Zen community serves your community and the community beyond. They provide silence, service, community, connection, spiritual teaching to all who enter, and are a place of healing in this ever increasing world of isolation, noise, polarization, and disconnection. Disconnection is the source of addiction and suffering. You cannot place a monetary value on what Great Vow Monastery brings to your community.

One of my friends recently lost her only son in a plane accident. Her grief has been inconsolable. As a society, we do not do grief very well. Her Christian friends were wanting her to get over it. People were afraid of her emotions. Because of what I have learned from spiritual communities such as Great Vow, I knew that grief is a sacred experience and has its own time and process for each human. I gave my friend Great Vow's contact information and encouraged her to go and stay and walk the beautiful grounds and paths that are so healing for such times of suffering. Please consider that the views from Great Vow are truly a part of the deep spiritual healing that is provided from the land, the trees, the view of the air, and the water. Even science has proven that nature provides co-regulation for people. When I was child living in an abusive situation and in a concrete apartment jungle, I would sometimes take solace on the edge of a shrubby hill and sit underneath a small mesquite tree. It was so comforting. I instinctively went to nature to regulate myself as a child. I

think back to this little paltry shrub and my desperation to connect with the earth. A beautiful view, an Oak tree, the sound of water, fresh air---such things are our birthright and more than this, nature saves lives and even provides unspoken teaching. Bringing in a company that lacks integrity, fails to value the management of land and water as a sacred work, and ultimately ignores the heart of what it means to be a human or living being on this planet is contrary to building a thriving community. I urge you to say no to this kind of development.

I encourage you to go and walk the grounds of Great Vow or spend a day with their community. Enjoy a meal in silence or sit in silence with others for a while or a few days. Notice what arises in your body. Most likely tension and restlessness and underneath that, fear. Unsustainable industries, in my opinion arise from a place of fear. The fear that our community won't have enough and so we'll take what distracts and feeds us now without realizing that starvation that will result from such short-sighted decisions. Please reflect and discern on a vision for a sustainable and beautiful community that builds connection instead of division and that ultimately brings well-being to your community. There can be no price placed upon the value of the wellness and healing that Great Vow and the View from Great Vow provide.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Lowery

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"There are no shortcuts to any place worth going."
---Helen Keller