

Character of the Area

[Case File: T3-2022-16220]

From:

Kristy McKenzie

34828 SE Carpenter Lane, Gresham, OR 97080

carpenterlanefarm@gmail.com

Attn: Hearing Officer, Multnomah County Land Use Planning hearing re: PWB filtration project

Dear Hearing Officer,

In reviewing the Portland Water Bureau's application filed with Multnomah County for a Conditional Land Use permit, I was disappointed with their arbitrary conclusion that building the mega-industrial complex and miles of new pipelines would not change or impact the character of the area. I'm betting whoever typed that up does not live here, because I don't know one single resident who would agree. Please accept this letter as a true reference to the character of the area referenced in PWB's application from a long-time resident.

Me and my husband Joe live on Carpenter Lane, on the same property and in the house next to where I grew up. I am a teacher at Hogan Cedars Elementary School. I've been teaching for 24 years in the Gresham Barlow school district, including at West Orient Middle School. I myself graduated from Orient and Barlow schools as well. My husband Joe McKenzie is a real estate appraiser & Barlow baseball & football coach. The property we live on is owned by Roberts Family Trust. The farmland & buildings are leased to R&H Nursery. The original family parcel included 4 dwellings. We have a long history of living here and know the character of the area.

Carpenter Lane is a special place. I am a second generation born and raised there, and the third or four generations that call Carpenter Lane home. My family has owned this land and farmed here since 1952 when my grandpa bought 35 acres and their first home on Carpenter Lane. They started farming dairy & beef cattle, kale, potatoes and strawberries. In 1960 they moved their first home on Carpenter Lane around the corner and built the existing farm house in its place, where it sits today on Carpenter Lane and where we live. My dad planted his first row of raspberries as a Gresham High School FFA (Future Farmers of America) project in 1965. My parents married in 1968, and a year later they moved their house from Portland out to the farm, where grandpa had given them 2 acres of the farm with Cottrell Road frontage. By 1980, the berry farm was booming! As a result, my dad purchased an adjoining 10 acres on Carpenter Lane that he filled with raspberries and built our family home. Soon every farmable acre on the farm was growing raspberries, and eventually he added a strawberry patch for u-picks that my sister and I would run until we were old enough to work on the berry machines. For most of the 1980's and 90's, our berry farm was a regular employer of numerous high school kids over the summers and had full-time crews in the fall and spring.

In the late 1990's, nurseries had begun replacing most of the berry farms in the area due to the sinking profit margin and escalating operating costs. My dad's cousin, also a local to the area, was already in the nursery business, so they decided to join forces, and with his cousin's expertise they turned the berry farm into a tree farm. My dad and his cousin put endless hours into the holding pond and irrigation

system to keep the trees watered in the hot summers. Soon they were leasing the same lands we had leased for the berry farm from neighbors in the area, buying more tractors, and running a successful, year-round wholesale nursery. A few years ago my dad retired and now the nursery is operated full time by his cousin, who also purchased our first family home and 2 acres on Cottrell from my parents. I don't ever see a time when that land won't be farmed because the zoning laws protect it from development. It is also part of the West of the Sandy River Metro Rural Reserve, which is supposed to prevent development and changes in land use/urban growth boundary for 50 years.

Growing up on Carpenter Lane was something special. We had full run of the area, through fields and forests, down the rural roads with no striping, no shoulder, and mainly just farm traffic. The kids on our road walked to the bus stop on the corner of Cottrell and Carpenter. If it was raining, we would all huddle inside my grandparents' house and watch out the window for the bus to come from the other end of Carpenter, while grandma fed us cookies and hot chocolate. My sister always had a horse or two in the barn and would ride all over the countryside, through neighboring farms and up and down every road. We all walked or rode our bikes everywhere – friends' houses, neighbors, the country market, sometimes even school - and even though the roads had no striping and no shoulders, we were safe. The only traffic was folks who lived in the area and farmers on tractors and old farm trucks. Everyone knew to watch out for kids on the road because they were raising their families here too. I'm thankful that it is still the same today. I watch the neighbor kids and their dog play in the street, waving at the neighbors and farmers driving by. Carpenter Lane is busy, but not with cars. To this day it remains a safe haven for walkers, joggers, equestrians, cyclists, and children selling roadside lemonade.

We moved back to Carpenter Lane about 3 years ago to escape the growing, busy, ever-expanding city of Gresham. We renovated my grandparents' farm house, keeping grandma's favorite pink bathroom, grandpa's wood shed and even the clothes line that I remember hanging clothes on with my grandma throughout the summers. We love walking our dogs up and down Carpenter Lane, Cottrell, Altman, and the other quiet country roads, passing other dogs and their families, tractors, cyclists, equestrians and more. Raising the last of our kids and becoming empty nesters on the same property I grew up on is *significant and intentional*. Not much has changed on Carpenter Lane since the 1950's. There are a couple new homes at the end of the road but all the original farm houses are still there. People still walk their dogs, kids still ride their bikes, and the road still has no shoulder or paint. Local traffic still watches out for kids, cyclists, dog-walkers, horse riders, and slow-moving farm equipment, because they live here too and do the same things. Farm traffic is respectful and friendly – whether it's a slow-moving tractor and the driver waves you around when it's safe, or a big truck trying to make a tight turn and waving at you with appreciation for your patience, all the local nurseries and farms are just that – *local*. They have kids on these roads too, or they work at the farms and nurseries and know the character of this area so they respect speed limits and are used to people on the street, out enjoying the country.

At night, it's quiet and we listen to the sounds of crickets and the wind through the trees. The farms and nurseries keep normal business hours, so people that enjoy outdoor activities in the evenings aren't disturbed and won't encounter any commercial farm traffic. This is especially nice in the summertime when people are barbequing and spending more time outside in the evenings taking advantage of the long days. The night sky is also something that we do not take for granted. We are grateful to be away from the bright lights of Gresham. Our evenings are often spent sitting on rockers in our backyard next to the old wood shed, listening to the crickets, owls and oftentimes coyotes while stargazing at the beautiful night sky. There isn't a single light from the farm that impedes our view. The barn light that

shines downward for safety purposes is not visible from our backyard or the street for that matter. As people who live here we work hard to protect *our* way of life.

In the morning, we enjoy the sounds of the large variety of birds and I especially love listening to the many hummingbirds that frequent the feeders. I have two hanging in my kitchen window just like my grandma did so many years ago. We also enjoy taking our three dogs on early morning walks before work. Although there are a few tractors on the road heading to the fields and a few cars heading to work, everyone knows our dogs and wave as they pass by. There is never any need for us to move off the road, there is always room for us, our dogs and other early morning walkers, runners and bike riders. We feel so lucky to be away from the hustle and bustle along with the traffic and noise of the city.

Rural living has always equaled a quiet, peaceful, and quaint way of life, and that is especially true in the Carpenter Lane area. The traffic on Carpenter Lane's dead end portion consists of local residents or tractors, so it's a favorite spot for people from neighboring areas to come walk their dogs, jog, bicycle, and ride horses. The road still has no striping, no shoulders, although definitely more than a few potholes, but it's still safe and definitely not busy. Most importantly, it's home to myself and my neighbors – the families of Carpenter Lane who love where they live and live there specifically because of the rural character of our area.

As someone who has brought her family back to the land she grew up on, so they can experience the peace and tranquility of country living, I hope that Multnomah County will do the right thing and protect this rural preserve from disappearing. An industrial complex the size and scale of PWB's proposal would not only permanently change the character of the area, it would *destroy* it. Please protect our rural community. Not just for the families that live here now, but for all the generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristy McKenzie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail.

Kristy McKenzie & family
34828 SE Carpenter Lane
Gresham, OR 97080