

## October 2023 Meeting Minutes

**Attending:** Barbara Menne, Chuck Jensen, Elly Claus-McGahan, Debra Grady, Nancy Atwood, Sue Lepore, Linda Cohan, Mustafa Haziq, John Doherty, and new member Aregai Gebre. This ZOOM meeting screen was enhanced with closed captioning.

### Candidate Interview, Kristin Ang, Port Commissioner Position 5

A **recording** of this interview is available on our website. The following is a paraphrase of her remarks. For more information, look at [kristinforport.com](http://kristinforport.com).

**Kristin Ang** is currently the **Port of Tacoma Commissioner Position 5**. She has a business degree from the **University of Puget Sound** and a law degree from **Cornell** with an emphasis on international legal affairs. She serves on the executive boards of the **Washington Council on International Trade** and the **Central Puget Sound Economic Development District**.

Her campaign platform four years ago was unique in its emphasis on the environment, environmental justice, and collaborating with the Puyallup tribe of Indians. That was radical at the time, but there has been a successful culture change and these values are now accepted and implemented at the Port. It has become a more inclusive greener port that expands economic opportunity for more people.

The Port has set targets to zero emissions at 2040, invested in shore power, quiet sound (reducing underwater vessel noise for marine life), and decontaminating superfund sites. It is exploring opportunities in offshore wind and green hydrogen. It is also part of a study between the **Department of State** and South Korea for a green corridor (a concept introduced in COP26-27 about zero emission shipping corridors) between Seattle and Tacoma and South Korea. A study by the **Pacific Merchant Shipping Association** showed that it is the cleanest gateway from Asia to the US by 26%.

#### 1. **Where do you see climate issues having major impacts on areas under the Port's jurisdiction and how will you guide the Port's response to those issues?**

There are two ways to address climate, one is to **reduce emissions and pollutants**, and the second is **resiliency**. To **reduce emissions**, we are electrifying everything we can. We have also set up a zero-emission truck collaborative with industry, truckers, labor, environmental groups, and the tribe. Industry actually wants this because of greenhouse gas reduction requirements from the administration. And it's hard enough to meet these zero emission targets and get the technology going, get the infrastructure going, but to do it equitably is the other difficulty. We have to make sure that these economic opportunities and investments go into the communities they were intended for in the **Justice 40 Initiative**--overly burdened, historically oppressed communities of color, women and minorities.

For **resiliency**, we are working on a vulnerability assessments resilience framework--how we will deal with flooding, sea level rise, wildfire smoke and other climate exacerbated hazards. In

the past few years, we've had the wildfires, the flooding, and some extreme temperatures so we were able to test some situations and protect our workers from them. Sea level rise is happening faster than expected and it is not just a Port issue—it is a national security issue. We are a top military strategic port and the military and WA state will spend billions of dollars securing a lot of infrastructure, a huge investment.

**Q—Linda Cohan—what do you have to do specifically to take on sea level rise?**

Currently we are just dealing with stormwater but will have to do more soon. In 20-30 years it will urgently need to be addressed, so we need to do something right away. We are in the research stage on costs and strategies for raising up roadways and shoring up the terminals. It's going to be a lot, we may look at how the Netherlands deals with it.

- 2. Do you have a plan to manage new development in the Port so that there can be a balance between paved space, green space, and habitat? So development does not lead to further environmental degradation through loss of green space and increased construction & traffic?**

These questions are still using the framework of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These things are not mutually exclusive-- we cannot operate unless we actually address environmental issues, it's economically viable as well as part of our survival. For the first time our mission statement includes *protecting and enhancing our environment* along with harbors and investments and marine cargo. Our historical toxic superfund contamination sites like Oxicom are "economic black holes" no jobs, no activity, just constant monitoring and years and years of expensive remediation. We can't have that anymore. And if we want to be competitive, we have to be green--companies are asking what our greenhouse gas emission levels are--they want to green their supply chains. The community as well is watching us, the city of Tacoma wants our pollution to be monitored. We won an award for educating our tenants on stormwater pollution reduction. The clean energy standards are high in Washington state, holding us strictly accountable, but we are actually a leader in that nationally and at times we have pushed for greener policies on the national stage.

**Q—Mustafa Haziq-- do you hear that the profitability of the port is less than ports on the East Coast or other places because of the cost of being more sustainable?**

Yes we do hear that, if they are not sustainable their cost of doing business is less. That is why we work on this collectively-- we are all part of the **PNW Ports Clean Air Strategy** and that helps to equalize it. That's also why we ask for federal and state grants to help. It doesn't put us at a disadvantage per se, it's just the cost of doing business in the PNW --we want to maintain the natural environment here and have clean air and clean water.

**3. Between the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, Infrastructure, and Build Back Better Bills, there will be a lot of federal money for local climate measures. How do you plan to tap into these funds for use by the Port? What would your priorities be for spending these funds?**

At international conferences on the clean energy transition, many reporters and businesspeople are so excited about the legislation that has been passing in the United States that would accelerate how we address the transition and say we're so lucky! They are quite optimistic, yet from the media here all we hear is how Biden doesn't do anything! A very different perspective. It's true that there are a lot of funds to tap into. We do have a grants committee and we do have a full-time grants specialist to aggressively pursue grants because we know all of this is going to cost a lot of money. With the **Northwest Seaport Alliance**, we discussed new state grants like the **Clean Air Agency** pollution reduction grants plus how all the **Climate Commitment Act** monies will be used. We do use the **Dept. of Health's** environmental health disparities map in determining priorities. Last year in the legislature I advocated for help paying for some of our shore power, our zero-emission truck demos, some help with our zero-emission collaborate coalition building, electrifying our harbors, (whether that's zero-emission cargo handling or the infrastructure for our fleet of electric vehicles). In terms of priorities, I would say we just try to get as much as we can, yet it won't be enough. Three billion dollars sounds like a lot but split among many ports is not that much; we could use that amount and more all by ourselves for zero-emission trucks because costs are higher due to inflation. Shore power, which is how we can reduce vessel emissions when they're at berth, is expensive but it is what's happening in China and in Ca and over 50% of the vessels can now use it. We need to have it. We also have to think about cleaning up the contaminated lands and habitat restoration. The Port of Tacoma has received **Phoenix awards**, like the "Oscars" from the **EPA** for ground fill remediation, a big deal! Every year we go to the state legislature asking them to approve more remedial action grants because we do have a lot of contamination at the Port and we want to put those lands to good use and we want it to be sustainable.

**4. What is your plan to bring and support green, renewable energy jobs that are also high-wage, to the Port and County? What about green hydrogen hubs?**

That's why the unions were involved in our successful application for the green hydrogen hub, to make sure that these are quality good-paying jobs with benefits. A lot of people were in competition for these green hydrogen hubs, six to eight hubs to be granted infusing over a billion dollars into each particular area. Thanks to the leadership of **Senators Cantwell** and **Murray** as well. When I went to the **World Hydrogen Conference** a lot of countries had more advanced planning than we do. But there were some interests pushing for no colors (levels of fossil fuels in hydrogen production) –Saudi Arabia, US, and Canada--with their oil and natural gas reserves and carbon capture. Resistance to fast-tracking exclusively to green hydrogen stems from the lack of infrastructure and consequential delays, but if blue hydrogen supplies

that, what incentive would there be to convert to green? This is an area where the PNW ports can push. Green hydrogen is not the panacea for everything. In fact, a WA state study advises to “electrify everything that you can,” because green hydrogen is so energy-intensive to produce. That’s why it is only for a few applications—hard-to-abate industries like maritime, aviation, trucks, and steel.

Another source of good-paying jobs would be a connection with the offshore wind industry. This is very new for the West Coast but on the East Coast and around the world it is very big. Being part of the support and supply chain for the CA wind companies who have leases is something WA could get involved in right away. We would need some analysis and a coordinated effort between WA ports or even all West Coast ports.

**Q—Chuck Jensen- We’ve been following the US Oil project down on the Tideflats, could you brief us as to whether that is part of the recent green hydrogen hub award activity?**

It’s such recent news, it really is just known for sure that we did get awarded. Where the monies will go is still being decided. We applied for the PNW region to be a green (clean) hydrogen hub, because we do have hydroelectric power here. **US Oil** wanted to convert their Tacoma refinery (one of their 12 refineries) to green hydrogen. I’ll have to get updated on that.

**How much of the port workforce is unionized?**

Not sure of the exact percentages, we do have some non-union staff. Our maintenance staff is union 22. (Longshore 23 is the one that works with the shippers and gets the headlines. The Port is not part of that contract). We are currently going through contract negotiations with them, to make sure things are fair and they are valued. Port benefits and salaries are very good, higher than market.

**5. What are current tribal environmental concerns with the Port and how do you plan to address them?**

We have good relations with the **Puyallup Tribe of Indians** and have staff-to-staff consultations on many projects. One of the proudest was the restoration of the **Lower Wapato Creek**-- about 18-20 acres of habitat restoration with 5-6,000 trees planted, a great example of collaboration with the tribe that got awards. A class of first graders wrote a letter to the Port about planting trees there and were invited to plant some too. Just constant contact and conversations about many issues. A project called Echo near the marina will create a habitat site using clean soil from the Blair waterway deepening project, but the size of it was adjusted to be acceptable to the tribe. The [Maritime 253 School](#)—we had discussions with the tribe to see if it had any effect on their cultural resources. We assist one another, we can assist them with the terminal they intend to build, they assist us by giving us more room sometimes to store breakbulk (items that won’t fit in containers).

6. **How could the Port lead on collaboration between cities and towns in Pierce County to tackle common climate mitigation and climate resilience solutions as well as apply for federal IRA Act monies?**

The Port is part of the **Joint Municipal Action Committee** of local governments which meets once a month for updates and discussions of issues and projects. We had one-on-one meetings: with **Pierce County Council** about addressing climate change, with the **City of Fife** to address transportation infrastructure, homelessness, and jobs (helping to fund a Fife job mentoring program for the homeless as a result). We participate in the group that **Elly Claus-McGahan** leads for county and local municipalities to compare notes on grants and initiatives for climate resiliency. We have added staff to communicate more and build relations with the **Tacoma** community.

**Q & A**

**Elly Claus-McGahan—Can the Port be made more welcoming to the public? On a recent tour, a police car followed us most of the time. I understand that a lot has to be fenced off, but should some areas be inviting to the community?**

I'm not surprised that you feel that way--with all the trains and trucks it doesn't seem all that welcoming to the public or those with bicycles. My first tour a few years ago was by bike with 350.org, and a security guard came after us! Some areas are really not meant for the public or even safe for them (the **LNG** plant, decamination areas, the terminals), the public is invited to help us do some of the cleaning and are welcome in other areas. We are trying to make the **Maritime 253** campus area on the other side of the **Foss Waterway** accessible and inviting to the public. We'd like to change the vibe in a few areas at least, it's shouldn't be just for business and industry.

**This may not be your jurisdiction, but the Tacoma Dome transit station area does not give a safe or welcoming vibe either. If we want to make public transit attractive to the public, it needs to be welcoming, safe, and comfortable.**

We haven't been involved other than some advocacy work at the station, but agree that it's something to think about if we want to encourage public use of public transit.

**Sue Lepore- You mentioned offshore wind, I'm trying to visualize what the location would be?**

We are not actually putting offshore projects here in WA, although some ports like Rotterdam have them. If that were the case, we would have to go through studies to see what the effects would be on marine life, fisheries, birds, whales. The immediate work here is to support CA offshore wind projects--they need people to be part of the supply chain, manufacturing the parts or boats to service them. The business center is looking for a tenant to develop that.

***Final statement: If you ever have any questions, we have a community relations staff, a really great environmental staff, and we do presentations if you need one. And we give regular grants updates. See you all in person soon!***

## Announcements

**John Doherty--**

**CCL Fall Virtual Conference “Grassroots Rising: Leveling Up in the Climate Fight,”** will be held on Nov. 4 & 5. It’s free, open to all, and on Zoom. The keynote speakers are **Van Jones**, a well-known personality from **CNN**, and **Danny Richter**, former **CCL** staffer and skilled educator on the nuts and bolts of lobbying. **Drew Eyerly** brings in a conservative perspective (**CCL** is bipartisan), **Dana Nuccitelli** is a **CCL** climate project expert and enjoyable national personality as well. There will be in-depth seminars on Sunday and breakout rooms. There’s something for everybody, old-timers as well as new members! **[Information and registration here.](#)**

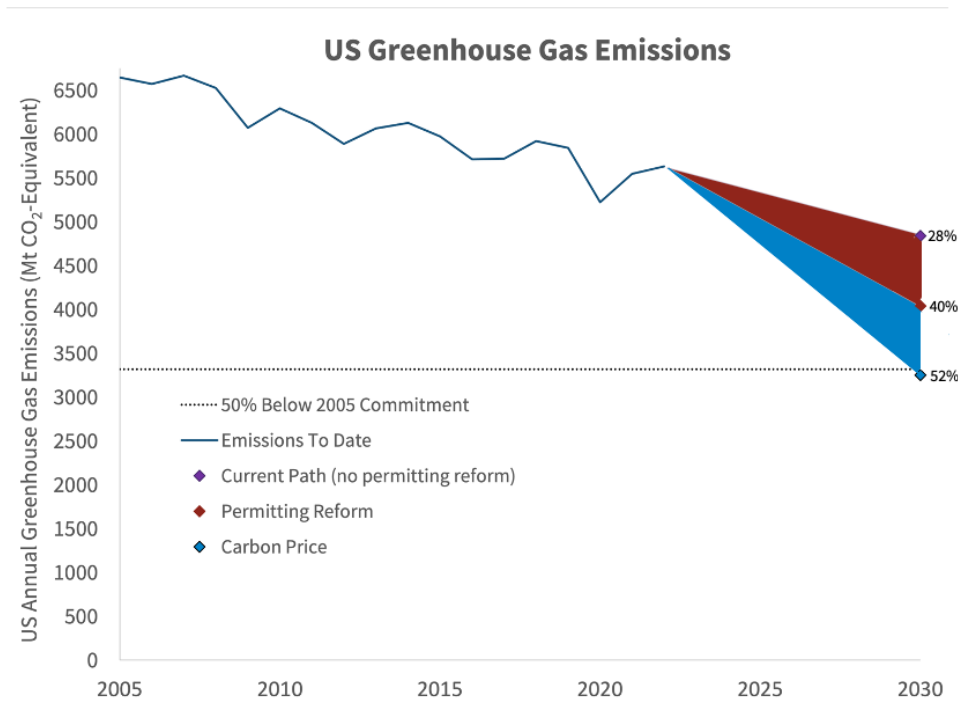
**Postcard writing group.** All 1500 get-out-the-vote postcards for the Virginia election have been mailed. This is a critical vote in a swing state. We’ve written postcards at members’ homes on Sunday afternoons this fall. We will start up again during the 2024 primaries and elections. Studies from the **[Environmental Voter Project](#)** show that this kind of effort does make a difference. In swing states, a half a percentage point one way or the other does make a huge difference in our national scene. People often ask “what can I do?” on climate—well here’s something hands-on that can be a significant contribution, and it’s fun, too!

**Chuck Jensen—Lee Nathan** is now **Derek Kilmer’s CCL** liaison since **Mike Kelly** stepped down. There will be a lobby session on Zoom with **Rep. Kilmer** following the national conference, probably Nov. 6, 7, or 8<sup>th</sup>, probably early afternoon. If you are interested in attending this half-hour meeting (and also a training session), contact **[Chuck Jensen](#)**. You do not have to be a speaker, you can just stay in the background and see what these meetings are like.

**Sue Lepore--** The **[Energy Innovation Act](#)** was reintroduced Sept. 27 in the **U.S. House as HB5744** by **Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA-24)**. He was accompanied by several CCL volunteers when he made the announcement in San Diego, which is fitting because CCL has been dedicated to promoting this kind of climate policy from the beginning, a policy called “the single most powerful tool we have” to drive down carbon pollution and hit net zero by 2050. It makes polluters pay and then gives a carbon cashback to the American people so the clean energy transition affordable for everyone. A FAQ is how the higher prices will affect lower income people--studies show that they will actually come out ahead or at least break even. The cashback system works well in the dozen or so countries that use it including Canada. See this quick explanatory video **[“Carbon Pricing in 60 Seconds”](#)**

**Linda Cohan—**

The graph below shows the impact of policies on U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. You can see that a **carbon price** (blue wedge) is required to get us all the way to the goal, and it would work quickly. Another key component will be **[permitting reform](#)**, as well as a **[carbon border adjustment mechanism](#)** for international commerce.



This bill is very similar to the earlier **EICDA**, even the carbon price is still \$15 a ton per carbon pollution (it seems like it should be higher, Canada's is \$85). This works however because of the other legislation that has passed recently such as the **IRA**. The reduction rate turns out to be the same or higher. One change is that there are no initial cosponsors, they are starting at zero in the hopes that it can be bipartisan. Now we can all promote this bill and get more cosponsors for it in Congress. We can contact our representatives and encourage others to do so. There are good educational [resources on CCL Community](#). I copied one flyer and made a **QR** code for it, I will send out to you. I even keep some in my purse to just hand out when I get an opportunity! We can do outreach in our ordinary lives; we don't have to wait for a tabling event. With some people who might be skeptical about climate change you can just frame it as a health issue, saving lives and helping those with asthma.

### Tabling Committee Report

**Linda Cohan**—We had a busy season, educating about home/appliance electrification and how it's about as cheap as its going to be to switch because of federal, state and utilities all giving incentives. Also about taking action by contacting members of congress or local officials on bills and issues. Next year we may try to go out with a portable kit sometimes, not the whole booth, "guerrilla" tabling! simple and nimble with a focused message and as few as 2 people.

### Future Chapter Meeting Planning

**Barbara Menne**—**November 15<sup>th</sup>** will probably be our assessment/goals meeting. We discussed the idea of an in-person social gathering for **December**. We will need a venue and input on dates and times for that. Zoom works, but in-person with refreshments will be fun!