



the PUYALLUP TRIBE of INDIANS
GENEROUS AND WELCOMING TO ALL PEOPLE

Puget Sound Energy should halt construction of LNG plant until we have answers



By Annette Bryan

Puyallup tribal “water warriors” recently constructed a structure shaped like a traditional longhouse to block the front entrance of Puget Sound Energy’s headquarters. Bold actions like this are becoming more common as Native peoples stand in front of bulldozers, hold prayer circles and activate tribal networks in a united stand against aggressive and well-funded energy companies.

As the indigenous peoples of these lands, we wage these battles on behalf of all that is sacred to us—our people, our lands, our waters and our very ways of life. But it shouldn’t be this hard. As sovereign nations, the federal government has made promises that reserved these lands, waters and fish for our use. Unfortunately, it’s a promise we’ve seen broken time and time again, especially when governments are faced with threats from a billion-dollar energy industry focused on profits over people.

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is building a Liquefied Natural Gas plant that will store up to eight million gallons of liquefied-fuel natural gas. I drive past the site twice a day on my way from home to work and I worry. As a mother, grandmother, daughter, former air quality technician and Puyallup tribal council member, I worry that our lives, our future and our culture are at risk with the construction of the LNG Plant. PSE continues on a fast track to construct their facility even though they don’t have all required permits and have held no meaningful consultation with the tribe who calls these lands and waters home. This isn’t new. We’ve seen energy companies bully residents and move forward with construction no matter the public opposition or potential treaty violations. You don’t have to look further than the Standing Rock protests, where thousands of tribal members from across the country gathered and flew their nation’s flags, to see that Native peoples have had enough.

To consult with our tribe isn’t a courtesy, it’s required for developments like LNG that impact our reservation lands and tribal members. But to date, consultation has been non-existent, come too late to inform the project and failed to fully address the tribe’s concerns. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians is exercising its rights as a sovereign tribal government to challenge the proposed LNG plant to protect the rights of the Tribe, its Reservation and its tribal members. *(Continued on the next page)*

The Puyallup Tribe continues to reach out to all entities to understand the project and its potential impact. In the meantime, at an absolute minimum, construction should stop until all permits are approved and the environmental assessment is completed. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency is working to complete a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which will help us better understand the greenhouse gas emissions and potential risks posed by LNG's facility. Until the agency completes this assessment, they will not issue an air permit. By continuing construction, PSE is violating the law and acting in bad faith with our community.

I have three young boys whose entire world exists within a potential blast zone of the storage facility. There's no guarantee that they would be out harm's way if there were ever an explosion at the facility. My mother also lives nearby. She has lung issues and I'm skeptical that she would be safe from air pollution from the plant. I have spent my whole life fishing from our tidal waters and traveling to the mountains with my grandparents to pick berries. I worry that an entire way of life for my people is at risk. I worked for the Environmental Protection Agency for 10 years, as a Puget Sound Clean Air Agency technician for 2 years, and have dedicated much of my career to environmental stewardship. It's more than just a gut reaction that tells me there are many risks posed by this facility to the public and our environment. This is why the Puyallup Tribe will not back down until we have all the answers and we know our people and our reservation is safe from harm.

Annette Bryan has lived in Puyallup for more than 40 years and is a member of the Puyallup Tribal Council. She has a B.A. degree from University of Washington and an M.S. degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Tufts University.