

January 1, 2003

It is said that, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Well, here is the picture that proves that old adage to be oh so true.

This photo shows one half of the Old Wagon Road (aka Coos-Sumner Lane) gone. It disappeared into the deep canyon during a recent, but not infrequent, slide. This is the controversial, alternative route for the gas pipeline. Had the pipeline already been laid, it would now be lying down at the bottom of the canyon with the remains of the road.

Here are the words that have been used over and over to describe this route and the ill-advised decision of using it. ---old---unstable---subject to frequent slides---narrow---winding---partially unpaved---. In other words, unsafe, unsuitable, and dangerous beyond belief.

This road is the only route in and out for many of its residents. It would also be the only access available for incoming assistance in the event of an emergency. The county commissioners have gambled our lives that this would not happen.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS!

Karen Wolfe
Sumner

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COOS BAY DIST OFFICE



Commissioners need to look at safety issue

This is not a letter to address pro or con issues over the coming of a gas pipeline into our area. This is a letter to address the immediate danger visited upon your fellow citizens due to the proposed change in the location of the pipeline route.

Those who are not familiar with the Coos-Summer Lane road, should take a drive all the way to Fairview so they can fully comprehend our alarm at the disregard for safety. This road is extremely narrow, winding, unstable and highly susceptible to slides. Only part of it is paved and the rest is graveled. It is the only route in and out for many residents.

This is the newly-proposed location of the gas pipeline. Should a disaster occur, there would be no escape for those of us living in this area. We would be cut off without an escape route. Furthermore, no help could get into the area.

This decision was made with total disregard for the safety of the people living there, and total disregard for the input of local fire chiefs. It is these small fire stations that would be dealt the impossible task of attempting to deal with an unmanageable disaster.

These experts have informed Steve Schute and the county commissioners that they could not respond adequately to a disaster of this magnitude for the following reasons: inadequate water supply; lack of equipment; lack of person-

nel; inaccessible and remote location; distance and response time; and road conditions. The experts have all characterized this route as extremely dangerous.

In spite of all the input, the decision-makers march right on. Steve Schute has no counter argument for the facts, concerns and fears. His only response is, "don't worry. Pipelines don't explode that often." He and the commissioners are willing to bet our lives that an incident will never occur.

This is earthquake country. I certainly share their hope that a disaster never happens, but, unlike them, I am unwilling to bet my life and the lives of my neighbors that it won't happen.

It is the purpose of government at all levels to protect and serve, and certainly, never to put citizens in harm's way. Stop now! Listen to the experts who clearly are telling you that this is danger beyond reason. Follow a route where people can evacuate if necessary and where help is accessible.

Karen Wolfe
Summer