

## **Statement for Port Commission April 13, 2011**

I understand that the 3 minutes allotted to me, are strictly for making a statement and I don't expect answers to my rhetorical questions now. However I think they are still important questions and so I will state them first, as part of my statement.

Why is the Port of Port Townsend considering renting space to the Border Patrol after almost 400 citizens of Jefferson County registered their concern about BP tactics and behavior at a public forum in Chimacum, held on November 3, 2008.

Do the Port commissioners think that we've forgotten their concerns?

Do the Port commissioners not remember that that public forum was sponsored by the City of Port Townsend, Port Townsend Leader, the League of Women Voters, and the American Association of University Women, that Scott Wilson served as Moderator and speakers included the PT Police Chief and the Jefferson County Sheriff, immigration lawyers, ACLU representatives?

Do they not remember the verified and accurate stories of Border Patrol agents deporting teenage boys who had lived almost their entire lives in Forks - Edgar Ayala, a Forks High School athlete who graduated with honors and 15 year old Carlos Bernabe, also a lifelong resident. Did their deportations make us safer - or did they serve to intimidate and frighten families whose only desire had been to settle, work and raise their children in a peaceful community.

Do the Commissioners not remember Roger Short, Chimacum dairy farmer saying, "I think the Border Patrol has gone too far," after having seen a Border Patrol vehicle driving by his fields two or three times a day? Were those drive-bys purely coincidental - or was their purpose to intimidate the workers there?

Perhaps the Commissioners never heard Nash Huber, respected organic farmer in Sequim, say, "We cannot function and continue to be a farm in that situation."

I've mentioned only the names that I think you would recognize. I haven't mentioned the documented cases of Port Townsend residents who stopped taking the public bus to the Catholic church or to their

English language classes at Peninsula College because of fear of the Border Patrol.

I haven't mentioned the Hispanic-American citizens living in Seattle, who decided to change their vacation plans and not come to Port Townsend, for fear of running into trouble with the Border Patrol.

Do the dark-skinned people of the Peninsula constitute such a grave terrorist threat that the Border Patrol needs to be stationed in both Port Angeles and Port Townsend?

Since 2008, I'm happy to say that Port Townsend and Jefferson County and their respective governmental leaders and agencies have shown courage, foresight, respect for individual rights and a sensitivity to their residents. Open discussions within the community, signs posted on public busses, presentations at local churches, and more ... have served to reassure - I hope - all citizens that we will not allow intimidation in our town.

That's why it's particularly disheartening to learn that the Port of Port Townsend is planning to rent space to the Border Patrol, despite their actions in the past. Have their tactics changed? I have no inside knowledge of their policies. I only know what I can see with my own eyes. Increased cruising through neighborhoods like Cape George make me wonder - will they now target brown-skinned gardeners and domestic workers?

How do the Commissioners feel about this issue? Is it just business as usual - after all, "we badly need the rent the BP will pay ... and they'll probably be long term tenants too." Do they justify the Border Patrol's presence as being something like a "marine trade?" Do they consider the actions of the Border Patrol as "none of their business", akin to not inquiring about an individual's politics when seeking to rent a house? The Port's mission statement includes the phrase "to protect and maintain our community resources" and I interpret that to mean our people, first and foremost.

We don't need increased BP presence in Port Townsend or Jefferson County. We don't need their so-called protection and we don't want it, regardless of the amount of money they offer. We don't want to see the intimidation begin again. I urge the Commissioners to reconsider their decision and at least open the rental decision for public debate and comment.

For those of you who have forgotten the details of that Chimacum event, I'd like to provide a website where you can watch the entire proceedings, in 3 parts. I encourage you to watch it.

And for those of you who'd like to learn more, there will be a Legal Observer Training this weekend, where you can **LEARN HOW TO LEGALLY PROTECT AND EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF YOUR FELLOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH THE INCREASING PRESENCE OF BORDER PATROL IN OUR COMMUNITIES,** Thank you.