PORTLAND

New report warns of 'grave risks' at Portland's critical energy infrastructure hub

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Posted: Sep 24, 2026 / 03:03 PM PDT
Updated: Sep 25, 2026 / 08:20 AM PDT

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PORTLAND, Ore. (KOIN) – A new report is raising serious concerns about fuel storage along the Willamette River as the city council looks at the site's future.

On Wednesday, Portland Mayor Keith Wilson cast a tie-breaking vote to approve the transfer of the fuel storage site known as the **Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub** to an investment firm, I Squared Capital.

The CEI Hub is a six-mile stretch in Northwest Portland along the Willamette River; according to the City of Portland. It stores 90% of that state's liquid fuel supply.

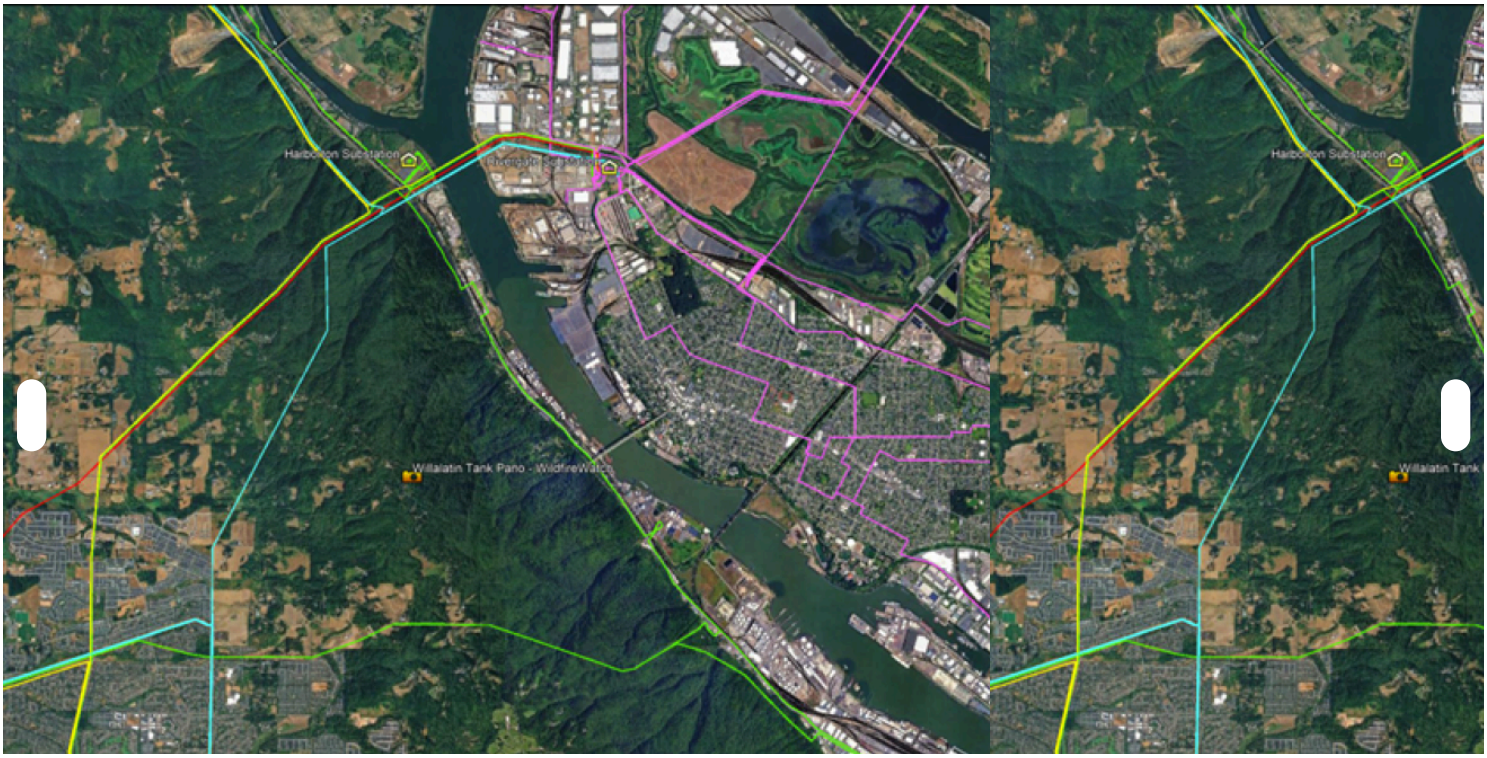
The biggest issue critics of the site raise against continuing to house the fuel at the location is how it may be impacted by the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake.

A new report from McCullough Research laid out the impacts of keeping the current location. Cited as the most concerning to the researchers are the looming climate challenges.

"The grave risks posed by urban wildfires, floods, droughts, or a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake must take priority here," the report said.

The researchers pointed to recent concerns over the increase in destructive urban wildfires, including the August Spokane County Wildfire that destroyed more than 600 structures in Washington State.

"Portland shares many of the same vulnerabilities as Spokane and Los Angeles, not least of which is that the city's largest Wildfire Hazard Zone sits adjacent to the Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub," the report continued.



Map of area surrounding CEI Hub (Courtesy: McCullough Research)

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The report also lists safety, air quality, and oil exports as areas of concern.

The city's website acknowledges the concerns but says that there are "no safe and viable alternatives for relocation in Portland."

Portland City Councilor Mitch Green and co-sponsors Elana Pirtle-Guiney, Sameer Kanal, Olivia Clark, and Tiffany Koyama Lane have proposed an amendment to the Hub Policy Project.

The group is pushing for increased safety, reduced risk, and clearer policy language for a data-driven fuel storage reduction effort at the Hub.

"We need to set clear goals, recognize the dangers, and take these issues seriously to prevent a catastrophic event at the Hub," Councilor Green said.