



UNITED ASSOCIATION

of Journeymen and Apprentices of the
Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of
the United States and Canada

Founded 1889

Letters should
be confined to
one subject

UA Local Union: 26

Subject: NEXT Renewable Fuel Local Land Use Permits

Mark McManus
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1/4/2024

Board of Commissioners, Columbia County
Columbia County Land Development Services
Attn: Planning
230 Strand Street
St. Helens, OR 97051

My name is Adam Davis, I represent 2,300 Plumbers, Pipefitters and HVAC/R technicians across the western part of Washington State. Some of those members also live in Columbia County. I am writing you to voice our support of NEXT Renewable Fuel's efforts to build a renewable diesel production facility at the Port of Columbia County's Port Westward site. This as a win-win opportunity for the local economy, infrastructure and the environment.

Construction of this facility will hire more than 3,000 highly-skilled workers, the majority of whom already live in our region and other nearby parts of Oregon and southern Washington. Further, the NEXT facility will create more than 240 permanent direct jobs and hundreds of ripple benefit jobs in our county. These new jobs will inevitably lead to more money spent in our retail and grocery stores, on tourism and local recreation, and with local non-profits and organizations. The NEXT renewable fuels development will help Columbia County continue toward a healthy and sustainable local economy.

Oregon is a leader in the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable future and the NEXT proposal is a key element to meet aggressive state and federal goals to modernize the transportation sector.

We support the NEXT Renewable Fuels project because:

- NEXT will hire skilled union tradespeople to build their \$2 billion renewable fuels facility, creating more than 3,500 jobs during construction and prioritizing local hiring. This project supports hard-working union families and ensures highly-skilled labor builds a safe and reliable facility;
- NEXT will employ more than 240 full-time positions during operations, further supporting the success of our region. Most of these jobs can be filled by our local talent pool and NEXT has agreed to remain neutral in any future union organizing efforts for operating staff. Further, NEXT is working with the various trade councils to establish job training programs so Columbia County can become a green jobs hub in the transportation sector;
- NEXT will contribute more than \$16 million annually in local tax revenue and \$5.5 million in port fees, which can support vital county services, taxing district projects and port

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modernization. This could lead to additional union work to improve infrastructure in the region;

- NEXT will restore more than 450 acres of defunct timber property back into thriving wetland habitat, which is a boost to the ecosystem and neighboring properties.
- Lastly, the project will provide local apprenticeship opportunities and jobs to our members who are in some cases driving several hours each day to work on projects in other communities.

As the Board of Commissioners know well, Oregonians prioritize the health and preservation of our environment just as high as we prioritize responsible economic development. The very nature of NEXT's proposal is dedicated to overhauling a dirty transportation sector and building the foundation for immediate and long-term climate benefits. Our review of expert research on the subject concludes that renewable diesel:

- Is up to 80 percent cleaner than fossil diesel and doesn't require engine retrofitting
- Could eliminate more than 5 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, making the project a significant net benefit to cleaning our air
- Will drastically reduce NOx, CO and particulate matter in the transportation industry

I respectfully ask the Board of Commissioners to approve NEXT permits without delay so we can start building a cleaner future for our communities.

Sincerely,



Adam Davis, President UA Local 26
Longview, WA