



## United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers Local 153

3049 South 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Room #213, Tacoma WA 98409 (253) 474-0527

January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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

Re: NEXT Renewable Fuels Local Land Use Permits

Dear Columbia County Commissioners:

The members of Local 153 Roofers and Waterproofers support NEXT Renewable Fuels' efforts to build a renewable diesel production facility at the Port of Columbia County's Port Westward site. This project is an essential opportunity for the local economy and the environment. Our Local represents skilled workers that live in Columbia County and adjacent counties that are excited about the opportunity to work on an amazing project like this close to home.

Along with the 3,000 highly skilled workers hired for the construction of the project, the NEXT facility will also create more than 240 permanent direct jobs and hundreds of ripple benefit jobs in our region. 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 and Cowlitz County continue toward a healthy and sustainable local economy.

Our members will continue to support the NEXT Renewable Fuels project for the obvious environmental and economic benefits, but in closing would like to stress the following points below relative to the Local Land Use Permit:

- The County has already decided that the NEXT Renewable Diesel facility can and should be constructed. These applications further that decision by ensuring adequate multimodal transportation availability.
- A rail connection to this facility has been part of the design since it was first discussed with the County in 2020 and NEXT has been open about what rail could be used for.
- 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 modernization. This could lead to additional union work to improve infrastructure in the region.

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,

Richard Geyer

Business Manager Local 153 Roofers and Waterproofers  
253-474-0527