

Columbia County Board of Commissioners
230 Strand St.
Columbia County Courthouse Annex
St. Helens, OR. 97051

February 7, 2024

Columbia County Board of Commissioners:

Re: Next Renewable Fuels

My name is John Flynn. I am a resident of Kalama, WA. I submit to you some comments relative to Mr. Brian Heikkila's (Crosstown Consulting Associates) mitigation plan regarding NEXT Renewable Fuels and railroad operations specifically addressing traffic impacts at Kallunki Road crossing on the Portland and Western track at Port Westward, OR.

Mr. Heikkila's first suggestion for impact mitigation is that the projected 100 car (7,000 ft) unit trains, both inbound to the facility and outbound from the facility could be split in half to 50 car (3,500 ft) trains, thereby decreasing the crossing blockage time from about 8 minutes to about 4 minutes when traveling at 10 miles per hour. What Mr. Heikkila fails to mention is that instead of one inbound and one outbound train per day there would be two inbound and two outbound trains per day equating to the same amount of time of delay at Kallunki Road. Another omission from his mitigation plan is who would pay the cost of the additional train crews. Would P&W railroad bear the cost or would NEXT Renewable Fuels pay for the additional train crews?

Another suggestion Mr. Heikkila brought forth is the utilization of a Form B Track Bulletin whereby a railroad employee (Employee In Charge) would control train movement over Kallunki Road during mint harvest at the request of local farmers. One question not addressed is who would pay for the railroad employee (EIC)? Would it be P&W Railroad, NEXT Renewable Fuels or the farmer(s) requesting the Form B?

Neither Mr. Heikkila nor NEXT Renewable Fuels has addressed the impacts of an estimated additional 318 cars inbound and 318 cars outbound (total 636) to and from the NEXT facility at the approximately 90 at grade rail crossings (from openrailwaymap.org) on the P&W Railroad tracks between the BNSF Interchange at Lake Yard and Port Westward. This additional rail traffic will directly affect the public and emergency responders (Police, Fire and Ambulance). These crossings impact the communities of Linnton, Scappoose, St Helens, Columbia City and Rainier along the P&W Railroad adjacent to US Highway 30. Few of these at grade crossings are protected by flashing gates and lights. The majority just have standard Railroad Crossing signage.

I respectfully request that you answer these comments and questions prior to implementing any plans going forward.

Thank you.

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