

Continued Testimony for the NEXT Publi...

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Continued Testimony for the NEXT Public Hearing of January 10, 2024

LH

Linda Horst <lindahorst45@gmail.com>

To: **Planning Department.UserGroup**

Wed 2/7/2024 4:55 PM

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February 7, 2024

Columbia County Board of Commissioners
230 Strand Street
Columbia County Court Annex
St. Helens, Or 97051

RE: NEXT's Conditional Use Permit and
Modification of Prior Approval

Columbia County Board of Commissioners,

In reviewing the numerous responses for this final comment period, I was astonished to learn that on January 23, 2024 Department of State Lands (DSL) had renewed NEXT's permit for Removal and Fill despite NEXT submitting different maps from their originally approved DSL permit. It is alarming that DSL is referring to this new R/F permit as a "renewal" when the information they are reviewing for approval has been altered from the original.

Considering half of "DSL's Mission Statement" is to "protect wetlands and waterways of the State through superior stewardship and service", I ask that you consider the following:

- 1) How can this be a 'renewal' of an existing permit if NEXT has submitted different maps from those originally permitted by DSL in NEXTs earlier R/F permit?
- 2) How was DSL's Mission Statement to protect "through superior stewardship and service" honored by their neglecting any public notifications or public involvement in responding to this extremely impactful removal and fill request by NEXT?
- 3) In the DSL Resource Guide under the Essential Salmonid Habitat (ESH), Port Westward, 81566 Kallunki Rd, Claskanie, OR 97016 imagery is highlighted. Also, highlighted is nearby Crims Island. This island is a jewel of the Columbia River estuary restoration efforts so critical to salmon survival and restoration. How can this vital area and the DSL's regional approach to salmonid habitat (ESH) be securely maintained with approval of NEXT's R/F permit?

When thoughtfully analyzed, each question elicits a negative response. This is a small example of the myriad negative impacts of this dreadful proposal over the past seven years.

The Port Westward area is a complicated, sensitive location for agriculture, residents and industry. The land is highly vulnerable to spills and soil instability; and is further complicated by a limited infrastructure to serve the area in the event of an emergency, major flooding or seismic event. Residents depend upon this Board's due diligence in this matter for their safety, health, security and well-being. I strongly urge this Board to deny NEXT's two application requests.

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