

## Hayden Richardson

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**From:** James Hoffmann <hopvillefarms@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 7:20 PM  
**To:** Planning Department.UserGroup  
**Cc:** Save Port Westward  
**Subject:** Public Comment regarding NEXT Renewable Fuels application for a Modification of Site Design Review and Variance (DR 21-03/V 21-05)  
**Attachments:** Hopville Beaver\_Drainage\_District\_LiDAR.pdf

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### Dear Columbia County Board of Commissioners,

As the individual owner of 242 acres of farmland located on Erickson Dike Rd, and the managing partner of Hopville Farms LLC, the owner of an additional 150 acres of farmland located on Collins Rd, including a commercial blueberry farm, I would like to submit for the record a public comment in opposition to the NEXT Renewable Fuels, and the Port of Columbia, ("NEXT/Port") application for a modification of site design and variance(s). **File # CU 23-11 & DR 21-03 MOD, Map/Taxlots: 8422-00-00100, 8422-00-00200, 8422-00-01100, 8421-00-00700, 8416-00-00200, 8416-00-00300, 8422-00-00300, 8423-B0-00700, and 8423-B0-00800, also referenced as 81009 Kallunki Road, Clatskanie, OR 97016.**

I understand that if approved, the proposal would relocate the rail tracks, tree buffer, and storm facilities northward from the Primary Agriculture (PA-80) zone into the Rural Industrial Planned Development (RIPD) zone. The properties total approximately 109 acres and are located at 81009 Kallunki Road. In addition to the Modification of Prior Approval, the applicant has submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit for a proposed railroad branch line in the primary agriculture (PA-80) zone, intended to serve the proposed diesel production refinery.

As I have testified on prior occasions, the NEXT/Port proposal, modifications, and request for conditional use permit(s) would severely compromise the integrity of surface water irrigation that my farm depends upon for agricultural purposes. As the attached LIDAR map clearly shows, the prime blueberry fields located in the Beaver Drainage District are "downstream" from the proposed NEXT/Port complex and the industrial uses as proposed are not compatible with blueberry farming, i.e. producing edible fruit, which depends on safe, clean water. Farms within the Beaver Drainage District do not have the ability to draw irrigation water from ground water wells, we rely solely on surface water irrigation. The high water table, and the significant annual precipitation, and the fact that agricultural and wildlife areas within the Beaver Drainage District are situated at or below grade to the Columbia River (see attached LIDAR map), connects the water flow from the proposed NEXT/Port site to the BDIC pumping station, and Hopville Farms is within this path. In fact, the Army Corp of Engineers described the Beaver Drainage District as a "bathtub" and the entire watershed is interconnected upon any significant rain event. Nobody living in the Clatskanie area disputes this fact. The applicants have failed to address how agricultural water quality will be protected - and they have failed to address the issue because it is impossible.

The proposed NEXT/Port facilities will exasperate flooding and lead to significant industrial contamination of agricultural irrigation sources. This 125 acre project has the potential to irreparably harm 2500 acres of agricultural

lands, putting \$25 million of property at significant risk, as well as all the associated jobs and neighboring households. The NEXT/Port facility puts at risk the fragile nature of the drainage district's aged levee and drainage system and this fact has received minimal attention or analysis - jeopardizing not just a jewel of Oregon's agricultural resources but a significant amount of the state's power generation facilities as well.

The NEXT/Port plan is irresponsible. The applicants have failed to address the issues affecting existing farmers and the local agricultural economy. The application should be denied.

Sincerely,

James Hoffmann  
Hopville Farms LLC