



Oregon Coastal Caucus

Rep. David Gomberg, Chair
Sen. Dick Anderson, Vice Chair
Sen. David Brock Smith
Sen. Suzanne Weber
Rep. Boomer Wright
Rep. Cyrus Javadi
Rep. Boice

January 5, 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,

We the Oregon Legislative Coastal Caucus support NEXT Renewable Fuel's efforts to build a renewable diesel production facility at the Port of Columbia County's Port Westward site. This is a win-win opportunity for the local economy and the environment.

Your Commission has already approved several permits for the NEXT facility, and it is located in an appropriate industrial zone. The permits you are considering this month further that decision by ensuring adequate multimodal transportation to the site. A rail connection to the facility has been part of the design since it was first proposed in 2020, and these permits will require NEXT's further investment in the area through land and road improvements.

NEXT's operations in Columbia County will be a new economic engine for our coastal communities and the State of Oregon. In the near term, construction of NEXT's facility – a \$2 billion capital investment – will create more than 3,500 green, union jobs. NEXT anticipates hiring most construction workers in the Pacific Northwest with preference given to qualified local vendors. During operations, NEXT anticipates it will employ 240 local workers.

The NEXT facility will generate millions in tax revenue and fees for the State of Oregon, Columbia County and the Port of Columbia County. Estimates show that NEXT will be paying more in local taxes than the current 20 highest paying corporate entities in Columbia County combined, generating a reliable revenue source for long-term local planning.

NEXT has already received its key state permits and met our state's high regulatory standards. They are using Best Available Control Technologies to decrease air emissions beyond the regulatory targets, and the project was the first to pass DEQ's new Cleaner Air Oregon standards.

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



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Sincerely,

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