

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

Re: NEXT Renewable Fuels Local Land Use Permits

Dear Columbia County Commissioners:

As a local Clatskanie Home and Property/Landowner,

I am writing to support the proposed NEXT Renewable Fuels permits being considered by the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. The \$2 billion NEXT project is the kind of infrastructure development that “lifts all boats” in a community like ours. All too often our skilled tradespeople have to move away to other states to find work, but the construction of this facility will hire more than 3,000 highly skilled workers, the majority of whom already live in our region and other nearby parts of Oregon and southern Washington. Further, the NEXT facility will create more than 240 permanent direct jobs and hundreds of ripple benefit jobs in our county. 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 diesel development will help Columbia County’s enter an era of economic growth we haven’t seen in decades.

I’m writing to you as someone who lives in Columbia County and can attest that there are hundreds of other skilled workers in Columbia County that will work on this project. My discussions with NEXT indicate that more than 80 percent (and likely higher) of the union workforce could be within quick driving distance to Port Westward. That is an incredible opportunity for local workers. Equally important is having local workers build the facility. This means having people who respect the local environment building the facility to the highest environmental standards.

The NEXT project will generate tens of millions in tax revenue annually for local services. Again, this single project will benefit all residents of Columbia County by paying taxes that support local education, libraries, public safety, county health services, job training, road improvements and community beautification programs. Additionally, NEXT will pay more than \$5 million in annual Port fees that will help modernize our port to make it safer and more marketable for responsible economic activity.

The NEXT Renewable Fuels project protects our local water resources, restores wetlands, creates jobs, generates tax revenue and adheres to local, state and federal regulations. NEXT is the kind of company we want to operate in Columbia County. Please approve their permits without delay.

Sincerely,

Steven W. Smart