

Columbia County Commissioners,

January 10, 2024

My name is Annie Christensen and for more than ten years I have spoken out against coal trains, crude oil trains, unit trains, trains filled with fish grease and trains filled with jet fuel products.

Once I asked a county commissioner how he could approve a project that hundreds of locals showed up to oppose, with hundreds more writing letters in opposition. He said quite candidly that he could dismiss the public comments because they were different from what he heard every day as a commissioner. Wow! I encourage you to think about that. You are surrounded by people who are paid to represent business. They are paid to represent an industry, not residents. But if you remember why people love to live here, it's the quality of life, not industry. Columbia County is a safe, healthy, family friendly place to live, often for many generations.

So I implore you to listen to us today. We came here for free, because it is really important to us personally. We aren't being paid to represent someone else's interests. We do not want a massive rail yard facilitating miles and miles of trains carrying who-knows-what. (Rumor has it that NEXT may sell the rail yard to Global, facilitating more crude oil trains.)

Please take a moment to look at us. We are here, not because our job requires us to be here. We are here because this matters personally. Your decisions impact our daily lives. Look at us. Listen to us. Read our comments. Read Greg Pettit's letter twice. Perhaps you, too, have been insulated by outside industry. Please take the time to consider the impact a massive rail yard would have on those of us who live here. Those of us in this room, today, came to tell you about what's important to us. More wrote letters. Please hear us.

Sincerely,



Annie Christensen

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