



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

Re: NEXT Renewable Fuels Local Land Use Permits

Dear Columbia County Commissioners:

I am the Mayor of the City of Rainier and I support NEXT Renewable Fuel's proposal to site their clean fuels facility in Columbia County and include necessary elements, like a short rail branch, to be sited as well. The Columbia County Commissioners have already approved the actual facility so approving the slight layout design changes and the rail branch are aligned with the County's previous approval.

The NEXT renewable diesel project will bring significant benefits to our city, let alone the County and State. During operation, NEXT will create more than 240 family-wage jobs that our local talent pool is qualified to fill. Also, during operation, NEXT will generate more than \$16 million in county property tax revenue annually. Local tax revenue will help support local education, public safety, health services, veteran services, and more. NEXT will generate roughly \$5.5 million in Port fees annually, which will directly support the modernization of our deepwater port, which is one of our county's most important economic engines.

Renewable diesel is 60-80 times cleaner than petroleum diesel and will drastically decrease particulate matter, nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide in our air. Communities throughout Oregon and along the West Coast will benefit from decreased toxic emissions, especially vulnerable communities adjacent to transportation corridors. Approving NEXT's permit for renewable diesel production in Oregon should be a high priority for Columbia County in order to create jobs, create healthy communities and enhance our beautiful ecosystems.

NEXT has earned the support of city, county and state elected officials, port commissioners, the Oregon Building Trades (and all regional trade councils in Oregon), Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, Oregon AFL-CIO, environmental leaders, Columbia County businessowners, environmental justice organizations, business advocacy groups and thousands of Oregonians throughout the state. I applaud not only their technical acumen in designing the project, but also their community outreach to educate local residents, address concerns and work with local leaders to maximize their ability to be a committed corporate partner.

Our residents will find new work. Our taxing districts will get a new source of sustainable funding. Our local environment will thrive. This is why as Mayor I want NEXT in my community. I respectfully urge the Columbia County Commission to approve the land use permits for NEXT without delay.

Sincerely,

Jerry Cole, Mayor
City of Rainier