

International Association of
BRIDGE, STRUCTURAL, ORNAMENTAL
AND REINFORCING IRONWORKERS LOCAL 29



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January 10, 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:

Allow me to introduce myself, I am Jason Fussell, Business Manager of Ironworkers Local 29. We represent the interests of union iron workers and signatory contractors across Oregon and SW Washington. We 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.

Construction of this facility will hire more than 3,000 highly skilled workers, the majority of whom already live in our region. Further, the NEXT facility will create more than 240 permanent direct jobs and hundreds of ripple benefit jobs in Columbia 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 fuels development will help Columbia County continue toward a healthy and sustainable local economy.

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.

I support the NEXT Renewable Fuels project because:

- Skilled union tradespeople will be hired to build the \$2 billion renewable fuels facility, creating more than 3,500 jobs during construction, and prioritizing local hiring. This project supports hard-working union families and ensures highly skilled labor builds a safe and reliable facility;
- NEXT will employ more than 240 full-time positions during operations, further supporting the success of our region. Most of these jobs can be filled by our local talent pool and NEXT has agreed to remain neutral in any future union organizing efforts for operating staff. Further, NEXT is working with the various trade councils to establish job training programs so Columbia County can become a green jobs hub in the transportation sector;
- NEXT will contribute more than \$16 million annually in local tax revenue and \$5.5 million in port fees, which can support vital county services, taxing district projects and port modernization. This could lead to additional union work to improve infrastructure in the region;

As the Board of Commissioners know well, Oregonians prioritize the health and preservation of our environment just as high as we prioritize responsible economic development. The very nature of NEXT's proposal is dedicated to overhauling a dirty transportation sector and building the foundation

for immediate and long-term climate benefits. Our review of expert research on the subject concludes that renewable diesel:

- Is up to 80 percent cleaner than fossil diesel and doesn't require engine retrofitting.
- Could eliminate more than 5 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, making the project a significant net benefit to cleaning our air.
- Will drastically reduce NOx, CO and particulate matter in the transportation industry.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason D. Fussell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'F'.

Jasnon Fussell
Business Manager/FS/T