

**APPEAL / REFERRAL**

*NOTE: If this is an appeal, please read the back of this form to determine if you have "Standing"*  
CIRCLE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

**APPEAL** or  **REFERRAL**

Mary Stites on Behalf of Appellant Northwest

**YOUR NAME:** Environmental Defense Center Phone: (503) 768-6673

Address: 10101 S Terwilliger Blvd City: Portland Zip: 97219

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION: Name:** NW Natural

File #: CU 25-169 Request: Conditional Use Permit to Drill Twelve (12)  
Injection/Withdrawal and Monitoring Gas Wells in the Primary Forest PF-80 Zone.

**APPEAL** Fee required

*File in the County Clerk's Office*

Please check one of the following:

I wish to **appeal** the decision made by the Land Development Services Department. This appeal is to the Columbia County Planning Commission. (CCZO Section 1702); or

I wish to **appeal** the decision made by the Columbia County Planning Commission. This appeal is to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. (CCZO Section 1703)

**Original request was:**  Approved or  Denied; Decision Date: 4/9/2026 (noticed on 4/15/2026)  
Appeal Deadline: 4/22/2026

**Reason for appeal (attach additional pages if necessary):** See attached Letter

**REFERRAL** Fee required

*File in the Land Development Services Office*

The application is reviewed Administratively without a public hearing, and I wish to **refer** this application to the Columbia County Planning Commission for a public hearing.

**Reason for referral (attach additional pages if necessary):** \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing statements are in all respects true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:

Date: APR 21, 2026 Signed: Mary Stites

FOR CLERK'S OFFICE USE ONLY

Received: 4/21/26 Received by: DK Receipt # 238431 Check# 1000

*Please route copies of this form to: Board of Commissioners (2 copies), Land  
Development Services (1 copy) and County Counsel (1 copy). Thank you.*

## **STANDING**

An appeal may be made only if you have “standing” to appeal. Please see Section 1700 of the Columbia County Zoning Ordinance or Section 197.763 of Oregon Revised Statutes, and consult your attorney to be sure you have standing to appeal this decision.

If you wish, you may appeal now and check later to see if you have standing; however, your appeal fee might not be refunded if it is later determined that you did not have standing and your appeal is denied on those grounds.



NORTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE CENTER  
10101 S Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219  
Phone: 503.768.6673 | Web: nedc.org

April 21, 2026

Columbia County Office of the County Clerk  
Columbia County Board of Commissioners  
230 Strand St.  
Columbia County Courthouse Annex  
St. Helens, OR 97051

**RE: Appeal of CU 25-169, NW Natural's Proposal for an Expansion of the Mist Underground Natural Gas Storage Facility**

Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC) submits this appeal to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners of the Planning Commission's decision approving CU 25-169, NW Natural's application for expanding its Mist Underground Natural Gas Storage Facility. There are two errors in the Planning Commission's decision that require reversal — or, in the alternative, remand — of the decision:

- 1. The Planning Commission erred by finding that the proposed storage facility can be approved in the PF-80 zone as a facility for the “processing” of natural gas.** Storage of natural gas is not an allowed use in the Primary Forest-80 (PF-80) zone applicable to the subject property. The Planning Commission determined, nonetheless, that the proposed facility could be permitted under CCZO Section 500 and OAR 660-006-0025 as the “processing” of natural gas, a use that is allowed in the PF-80 zone. This interpretation is contrary to the plain text of CCZO Section 500 and OAR 660-006-0025. The proposed use's primary purpose is storage of natural gas, not “processing” of natural gas.
- 2. The Planning Commission erred by limiting its consideration of the proposed use to above-ground infrastructure.** The Staff Report adopted by the Planning Commission's decision states that “[t]he current Conditional Use (CU) review conducted by Columbia County is limited, specifically and only, to review of the proposed *processing* of Natural Gas as it is proposed to occur in the above-ground (surface) portions of the twelve (12) proposed new wells/wellheads.” This scope of review is incorrect and corrupts the Planning Commission's findings and analysis approving the proposed facility. Under ORS 469.300(11)(a)(I), which explicitly exempts underground storage reservoirs and associated wells from EFSC jurisdiction, the County retains land use jurisdiction for the full proposed storage use, including the underground storage reservoirs.



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NEDC appreciates the opportunity to appeal this decision and looks forward to submitting more information regarding these errors throughout the appeal process.

Sincerely,

Mary Stites  
Staff Attorney  
Northwest Environmental Defense Center