



Outlook

Testimony: Port of Columbia County Rezone

From Kristine Pemberton <kristine.pemberton@everyactioncustom.com>

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To Jacyn Normine <Jacyn.Normine@columbiacountyor.gov>

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Dear Board Office Administrator Jacyn Normine,

Please vote no on rezoning the 837 acres of farmland at Port Westward. Turning productive agricultural land in the Columbia River Estuary over to industrial fuel production and storage is a gamble with consequences that would fall on the river, the wetlands, and the farm families who live and work there.

Under this rezone, the site could host oil refineries, coal export operations, fertilizer plants that handle ammonium nitrate, storage for explosive munitions, pellet mills, and large liquid tank farms. None of these belong on farmland along the Columbia. They bring real risks of spills, fires, and contamination, and the Port has not given adequate weight to those dangers or to what they would mean for the surrounding land and water.

State land use law is clear that high-value farmland should be protected. The Port's proposal treats that obligation as an obstacle rather than a responsibility, and it offers little to address the harm to nearby agricultural operations.

I'm also deeply concerned about salmon. The estuary is essential habitat, and billions of dollars have gone into bringing these fish back. Placing hazardous industrial uses and wetland fill in this area would undercut decades of restoration work that people throughout the Columbia Basin have supported.

Columbia County has a strong agricultural economy worth building on. Instead, the Port keeps returning to fossil fuel projects at Port Westward, and this rezone would make it easier for the next damaging proposal to move forward. I respectfully ask that you reject it.

Sincerely,

Kristine Pemberton

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