

From a concerned community member**Allie Freed <stelpa6@gmail.com>**

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To: Jacyn Normine <Jacyn.Normine@columbiacountyor.gov>; ePermits - Planning <planning@columbiacountyor.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Allie Freed, and I am a community member and frequent patron of the zen monastery across the street from Port Westward, and am a friend of the many farmers who work in this area.

I strongly urge you to protect the community and this sensitive ecological area from the dangers of the NEXT energy project and reject this application.

Environmental and community concerns from Columbia Riverkeeper:

- "The Commission cannot accept NEXT's mitigation plan as adequate, because it conflicts with uses in the area. NEXT's wetland mitigation plan will prevent the Beaver Drainage District from controlling flows of water to a significant number of farms that contribute to the character of the area and that provide valuable contributions to the local and state agricultural economy.
- Individuals associated with NEXT have a history of leaving communities with environmental contamination. The Transmissis Columbia Plateau failure and cleanup site in Odessa, WA, raises questions about NEXT's trustworthiness.
- Using this site for a biodiesel fuel plant is a poor decision, given that the soils allow for successful agricultural operations and that the area contains ecologically valuable wetlands.
- Proposed use is not water-related or water-dependent and thus, locating the use in the riparian corridor is not permitted. The impacts of the project in wetland and riparian areas are unnecessary and significant.
- The characteristics of the site (successful agricultural operations and sensitive wetland areas) are not suitable for a rail line used to transport fuels on an industrial scale.
- The proposed use will alter the character of the surrounding area in a manner that substantially impairs use of surrounding properties by introducing long, slow-moving trains preventing timely harvest and transport of crops, and industrial processes such as a gas flare that could create air, water, noise, and vibrational pollution in the area.
- Potential flaring, leaks/spills, fires, air pollution, water pollution, noise, and vibrations do not complement nearby agricultural operations, ecological functions, and wildlife habitats.

I have been a member of this community for several years, and would hate to see the natural beauty and serenity of this place disrupted by an enterprise which completely contradicts everything the surrounding area stands for. Please do not be swayed by large scale corporate money, and listen to the people who actually live and work in this area.

Please reject the application from NEXT Energy to protect our local farmers, wildlife, human health, and our Monastery's sacred stillness and natural beauty.

Sincerely,

Allie Freed