

Please reject NEXT Energy Project & protect our community

Linda Vick <lindacvick@comcast.net>

Mon 1/24/2022 5:34 PM

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

Cc: Jacyn Normine <Jacyn.Normine@columbiacountyor.gov>



Dear Commissioners,

My name is Linda C Vick. I live in Portland and I am a frequent visitor to Clatskanie for July 4th celebrations and attend Zen Community of Oregon's Great Vow Monastery for meditation retreats and other events. **I strongly urge you to protect the community and this sensitive ecological area from the dangers of the NEXT energy project and reject the application.**

I trust you are very familiar with all the well researched scientific evidence that this is an unsound and dangerous project that will adversely affect the health and welfare of citizens and the fragile ecosystem of the Columbia River and surrounding lands. But I will reiterate them for you:

- "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 habitat.

It is also clear from Next's proposal and the hearing that they have not adequately answered many questions and concerns about their plan and their poor environmental and business track record in other communities. Why should we trust them?

- How can we trust these jobs will go to local community members?

- What is the plan if there is a massive spill or leaking pipelines?
- If this project were to fail (like the biodiesel plant in Odessa), where will the accountability be to prevent its opening the door to turn into another fossil fuels export facility, like what happened when the Global Partners terminal failed to make biofuel profitable and quickly turned into a crude oil train terminal in 2013-14?
- Why should we trust that NEXT will "try" to use recycled organic materials and limit vegetable oils "as much as possible" especially considering 100% of their feedstocks are supplied by the fossil fuel mammoth BP, who holds one of the worst environmental records in the industry directly responsible for our runaway hothouse earth?! Why should we trust they will not source from new soybean monoculture fields contributing to deforestation, for example, especially considering this vague language and their partnership with BP?

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

Sincerely,
Linda C Vick