

FW: NEXT Renewables

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Wed 1/26/2022 4:29 PM

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From: TOM GORDON <tndgardens@comcast.net>

Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 4:10 PM

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

Subject: NEXT Renewables

Columbia County Board of Commissioners
230 Strand Street
Columbia County Courthouse Annex
St. Helens, OR97051

RE:NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC
NEXT Biodiesel Plant at Port Westward

Thank you for allowing comments for seven days after the Columbia County Hearing on January 19, 2022.

NEXT's proposal to build a biodiesel plant at Port Westward should be denied or at least put on hold at this time. While biodiesel is a desirable product, I do not feel we have enough information to evaluate if this is the right place, the right kind of plant, and the right company for Port Westward without a full EIS.

I just don't buy the idea that this is a 'green' enterprise. NEXT wants to use used cooking oil and so on to make their biodiesel, but the supply locally is far from adequate for their needs. They would have to bring in feedstock from farms, probably located in the Midwest. Rail traffic and trucking emit copious amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG). It would seem that any amount of GHG savings from the use of biodiesel would immediately be negated by the amounts of GHG's produced in its manufacture and transport.

In addition, they will use fracked gas and methanol for power and in the manufacturing process. Methane leaks out during fracking and all along the way to wherever it is used. Pipelines with their many joints and valves are notorious for it. Methane is even worse than carbon dioxide in emitting greenhouse gases (GHG's).

In addition to GHG's, there are various chemicals used in producing biodiesel, for example, sulfuric and hydrochloric acid, propanol, heptane, sodium hydroxide, etc. These will be stored on site in a facility built on unstable, liquefiable soil near the Columbia River Estuary. This (and its smaller estuaries) contain a variety of habitats including tidal wetlands, shallow water, and tidal flats. The mixture of salt and fresh water creates a unique environment rich in nutrients producing huge amounts of food. Thus they are important in food webs, as well as providing vital habitat for the life stages of mollusks, fish (including salmon), and crustaceans. It is hard to imagine the extent of damage to these important areas in the event of a spill of any of these chemicals reaching the Columbia.

This plant will have a water cooling tower emitting water vapor. Rising into the air 300', the plume of water vapor can form ice and fog at ground level under certain atmospheric conditions. This can create hazardous road conditions. As a result of our cold nights lately, it is not hard to imagine freezing fog and slick icy roads. Adding heavy trucks from the plant to the mix of farm and residential traffic could easily cause accidents on the somewhat narrow roads in the area. Water vapor itself is not dangerous, but the road conditions it can create are.

There are many problems associated with biodiesel manufacture but we should note that the process clearly does not require a deep water port. The Transmessis Plant in Odessa, Washington, also involving Mr. Christopher Efir, was located in semi-arid Eastern Washington far from the danger of a spill into a vital estuary, invaluable wetlands, and highly productive, long-established farms.

The Port wants to generate good jobs, but they do not want jobs that might wind up being a superfund site like Odessa and/or a stranded asset - in short a liability for their community. The market for biodiesel is volatile, water and air pollution a distinct possibility, noise, odor, and traffic make the NEXT proposal a dubious one at best.

A thorough EIS might help us weigh the benefits versus the pitfalls of this plant. We need to learn its full impact BEFORE it is built.

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