

Comments to the Columbia County Commissioners re proposed NEXT project at Port Westward.



forest dweller <72rover@gmail.com>

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

Dear Jacyn Normine: I understand you are the person to whom comments regarding the Next proposal at Port Westward for the County Commissioners are to be directed. The following are my comments.
Mary Duvall, MA, MSW

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Clatskanie, Oregon 97016

I strongly object to the siting of a "world class" bio fuels industrial site at Port Westward for the following reasons:

- 1 North Columbia County is a rural agricultural, small farm, and forest ecology and has been this ecology because of the nature of the habitat; the soil is high grade agricultural soil. inserting a polluting industrial refinery in this vulnerable ecosystem is not in keeping with the traditional and best use of the land.
2. The ecosystem is highly vulnerable as it is situated in the flood plain of the tidal area of the Columbia River. Recent flooding which is common to the area demonstrates that this is a recurring problem. The ecosystem also is a salmon habitat a currently highly vulnerable species native to the river. The dikes that protect this vulnerable ecosystem are not strong enough to guarantee protection of the adjacent water districts and farming operations from climate change induced flooding and other predictable hazards like earth quake endemic to the area.
3. North county, as well as south county, lack the infrastructure this bio fuel industrial project will require. Simple logic tells us that the source for biofuels, coming from distant sources with no water transport connections will not be by water as the proponents of the project have stated. In fact bio fuel materials will be transported by rail and our county is sorely lacking in adequate rail facilities to handle the massive quantities of source materials required.
4. The people proposing this facility have attempted other projects with a history of abandonment, leaving a toxic mess for clean up by the tax payers. These are not credible people to allow to industrialize our dikelands.
5. The jobs created by such a project will require special experience and training foreign to our county population. Therefore employees will have to be brought in, if they can be persuaded to leave their homes and current jobs, to staff this facility putting pressure on our narrow and already accident prone country lane roads, as well as our limited inventory of housing and ever escalating home prices. All these predictable consequences will destroy the quality of life in north county, which some of us consider the highest value of what Oregon offers residents: quality of life.
6. I am not alone in my objections to this project. Oregon as a state has prioritized protecting farmable land and at this time in our human history protection of farm land is more critical than ever. We face climate change that exposed us to a heat dome this summer and several snow and ice storms this winter

and flooding, land slides as a consequence of the rapid melts. These events will continue and make local resources for farm goods increasingly more precious. Local farms have found success in larger markets specializing in mint and blueberries. This kind of industrialization of farmland threatens their livelihood as well as quality of life. Additionally The Columbia Riverkeepers, 1000 Friends of Oregon, Protect Oregon Farms, Beaver Drainage district, and Save Port Westward, many of whom have raised objections to you repeatedly and over at least 7 or more years regarding this kind of industrialization stand together with me and most landowners in the dike lands in opposition: it is the wrong project, the wrong place, and the wrong people with a history of making a mess.

8. There are facilities where Next could place it's biofuels project that make much more sense. California has infrastructures that would meet the needs of such a project much more appropriately. Even the Port of Portland might serve its needs more adequately. Additionally there are projects much more suited to the agricultural lands here in north Columbia County which also might offer jobs to local people. One can imagine a dual purpose solar array with farming beneath the solar array generating both power and food without endangering local farms and able to hire local people. One can imagine fields of hemp grown on the land and manufactured locally into building materials more fireproof than wood, or made into clothing, bedding, or other products by local employees. There are an infinite number of forward looking industries that would make sense in this ecosystem without threatening the current local residents, wildlife, and stability of the community. I urge you to work in harmony with the people of North County who for seven and more years have been trying to protect our dike land and find its best and highest use.