

From: Janet Ault <janetlynnault@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 20, 2022 9:21 AM
To: ePermits - Planning <planning@columbiacountyor.gov>
Subject: I urge you to reject the application from NEXT Renewables



Dear Commissioners Heimuller, Magruder, and Garrett,

My name is Janet Ault, I live in Portland, Oregon, and I'm a long-time member and frequent patron of the monastery across the street from Port Westward. I strongly urge you to reject the application from NEXT Renewable Fuels. The air, water, noise, smell, and vibrational pollution emitted from this refinery would have severe detrimental effects on the quality of life here.

This is marketed to us as "green," but is shipping the enormous amount of oil in and producing and shipping up to 50,000 barrels of fuel a day out of this sensitive ecological area in our community really an environmentally friendly solution? And the energy-intensive process of converting feedstocks into a diesel fuel will still demand burning a massive amount of fracked gas.

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?

The applicant team shared that the impacted wetlands are not valuable partly because they've already been severely degraded by industry. Wouldn't more industry degrade the surrounding wetlands more? We need to protect the invaluable natural resources we still have. It feels irresponsible to me for NEXT to say they'll pay to upgrade the port's water treatment system if needed. What's needed is to keep our river clean and free of toxic wastewater in the first place.

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? I felt this point from the DLCD was glossed over during the public hearing.

How can we trust this project will not fail like the biodiesel refinery in Odessa? I'll remind us again that the backers of this project also attempted to build a refinery at the Port of Longview that was rejected because the company missed deadlines and failed to fulfill its obligation to the port. And if this project were to fail, 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?

In response to a question from Save Port Westward about their funding streams, the company asserted that surely business owners in Columbia County understand the right to keep their financial arrangements private. This is misleading. This is a massive project dealing in the billions of dollars and directly impacting the health of the entire community and Columbia River, not a small local business or non-profit. I feel we need to know all the interests involved.

Lastly, in the same response to Save Port Westward when asked about reviewing an Environmental Impact Statement from the Army Corps of Engineers, they said they were not aware if this is required and felt just an Environmental Assessment is adequate. To me this demonstrates a lack of transparency and third-party accountability.

I urge you to reject this application, and thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Janet Ault