

Testimony on NEXT

Melanie Plaut <melanie.plaut@gmail.com>

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



Dear Columbia County Commissioners:

Every Oregonian wants good jobs and a clean environment. While not a resident of Columbia County, I live near the Columbia River, and as a retired physician and a birder I, like you, have a strong interest in the health of our communities and the health of our natural environment.

NEXT Renewable Fuels would like to convince you that establishing a renewable diesel facility at the Port Westward site would contribute to these goals, without harming existing enterprises in the area. In fact if the County approves this facility you would be taking some huge risks - and the risk/benefit analysis comes down clearly on the side of not approving the facility.

Risk: The company does not have a history of successful similar enterprises, in fact if anything their history is worrisome for the likelihood of a failure of this project.

Risk: The pollution which the facility would create threatens surrounding businesses (e.g. burning natural gas creates smog; noise hampers agricultural tourism).

Risk: The potential for a disastrous event in the case of flood, earthquake or fuel spill could cause a billion-dollar expense, given what we now know about the dikes and soils in the area.

Risk: The time and money spent on trying to get this through the requirements of state and federal agencies, and the bad-feelings which will be created in this small community will not be easily healed.

Risk: The large rail yard planned is not simply a spur (as DLDC has noted), and brings into question whether this is in fact a "water-dependent" facility. Many long trains may cause resident and emergency delays and spoil the rural nature of the area.

Risk: The availability of domestic and overseas feedstocks cannot be guaranteed, which may lead to a business failure. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/less-than-half-projected-us-renewable-diesel-output-likely-by-2025-study-2022-01-18/>

I drove Erickson Dike Road recently, surveyed the agricultural lands, and saw over 20 species of waterfowl, eagles, and other birds. The wetlands and farmlands are beautiful and economically useful. Why would we risk their destruction for this iffy venture?

Melanie Plaut MD
Portland, Oregon