

NEXT Energy Concerns

Olivia K <olivia.davis.k@gmail.com>

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To: Jacyn Normine <Jacyn.Normine@columbiacountyor.gov>; Margaret Magruder <Margaret.Magruder@columbiacountyor.gov>; Henry Heimuller <Henry.Heimuller@columbiacountyor.gov>; Casey Garrett <Casey.Garrett@columbiacountyor.gov>

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

Dear Commissioners,

As a lifelong northwesterner and current Portland resident with ties to Clatskanie, I urge you to protect our community from the dangers of the Next Energy project and reject the application.

I'll list concerns over environmental and social impacts of this project, then turn to a more personal note about what it would mean to me to have this application blocked.

Environmental and community concerns from Columbia Riverkeeper:

(I've highlighted points I'd like to emphasize)

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.

Additionally, the County should reject the application because:

- 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.
- Long, slow-moving trains on the proposed rail line could prevent local mint or berry farmers from harvesting and transporting crops before they spoil.
- 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.
- As a result, the proposed use does not satisfy goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan related to protecting and preserving agricultural lands because an industrial-scale biodiesel fuel plant and rail line serving the plant conflict with use of surrounding agricultural lands.
- Potential flaring, leaks/spills, fires, air pollution, water pollution, noise, and vibrations do not complement nearby agricultural operations, ecological functions, and wildlife habitat.

Personal concerns:



I am a member of the Zen Buddhist community that practices at the monastery across the street from Port Westward.

Our monastery provides a sanctuary where local community members as well as students of Buddhism from anywhere in the world can come together and practice intensive meditation with advanced instructors. Meditation retreats can be rigorous, as we wake up early and spend many hours meditating, tending the grounds, and learning to become more aware of our thoughts and of the present moment. We also have time daily to wander the Monastery grounds, taking in the peacefulness of nature and feeling moved by the spectacular views of the Columbia River. It wouldn't be exaggerating to say that my experiences at the Monastery have altered the course of my life for the better, and the natural setting has played a part in that.

My heart breaks when I think of the peacefulness of our meditation retreats broken by noise and air pollution from this project or by a view obscured by industrial plants. My heart breaks when I think of the impacts this project would have on the community we care about and serve.

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

Sincerely,
Olivia Krishnaswami