

NEXT Public Comments for the Record

Kevin Andrews <g2gkevin@gmail.com>

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



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To the Port of Columbia County,

Attached is my letter with sound arguments against the NEXT Renewable in Clatskanie.

What is even more troubling is the Bait and Switch from Next's initial proposal of being water dependent to now wanting to add a rail spur. Please know that your support of this project will go on record and expect that if your votes go against the will of the public that your time in office will soon come to an end, since you will lose the NEXT election.

Please enter the attached letter into the record and be advised that we the people are now watching and getting engaged.

Respectfully,

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Kevin Andrews

Cell 812-573-9688

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kevin Andrews. I live at 80366 Quincy Mayger Rd. Clatskanie, Oregon 97016.

This letter is to express my concerns about the proposed NEXT Renewable Fuels Project.

I have met with members of the Beaver Creek Drainage District regarding this proposed project, attended public meetings, and personally communicated with members of the NEXT project regarding my concerns. Those concerns and reservations remain, however, especially since this proposed project is, quite literally, in my back yard.

I own 20 acres of Designated Forestland, that just happens to be the land where I intend to retire and enjoy the pleasures of being out in nature. My forested parcel of land overlooks the Columbia River and Crims Island approximately 4 miles east of the proposed NEXT Renewable Fuels site. During the winter I can see the buildings at Port Westward through the trees.

In the interest of full disclosure, I work as a Quality Control Manager and my expertise is in the petro/biochemical field. I have traveled the country working in refineries and chemical facilities for Exxon, Chevron, Texas Petroleum, Tesoro, BASF, Intel and others. I worked as Chief Inspector for the metering station project at the Port Westward facility that connected the Compressor station we built and piped in the Mist mountain range that sits between Vernonia and Clatskanie. I explain this because I am familiar with Port Westward and I have an intimate knowledge of facilities like this and understand the impacts, both positive and negative, this proposed project could have – like I said, “in my back yard.”



The project proposed by NEXT will alter the character of the surrounding area in a manner that substantially conflicts with the lifestyle and, frankly, the daily existence of the people in this neighborhood. This is not an industrial area – the Columbia River facilitates industry – but not in an area where people live – and live off of the land. For instance, just down the road from my property, at Batwater Station, is a recently expanded 26-acre salmon habitat that also hosts waterfowl, turtles, and the endangered Columbia River White Tail Deer. Oh, yes - and bats!

The physical area of the proposed project is surrounded by some of the finest organic Blueberry and Organic Mint farms you will find in the whole country. Many Bald Eagles nest along the banks of the river, some within view of my house. There are mink, raccoons, (which are cute as heck but an extreme nuisance), a couple families of coyotes, (I wish they ate more raccoons), and the red legged frogs, that make this land their home. Local ranchers graze their cattle, and local

farmers use this area for feed and grains in addition to growing crops for the market. Nearly 40 local farms will be affected by this project.

A diesel fuel refinery simply doesn't fit in our rural, agricultural setting. (It would be like setting up a rock and roll band next door to a daycare facility.)



My concerns are valid, as are those of my concerned Columbia County neighbors – we must not be ignored! If approved, this project will impact and change our neighborhoods permanently and, in my opinion, to the detriment of all living things that make this area their home.

There are currently a few trains that travel through our neighborhoods and properties along the Columbia River. NEXT CEO, Mr. Christopher Efirm, has stated that trains would only be used “as needed.” I know for a fact that the “as needed” status does not mean every now and then.

I also know that the most efficient way to move fuel products is via pipelines. Since there is currently no pipeline distribution system in place (for this project) the *most efficient* way of moving the product to distribution facilities around the country is by rail, which means we have the potential of having hundreds of slow-moving rail cars daily and/or weekly if and when the proposed facility hits the production numbers they are projecting.



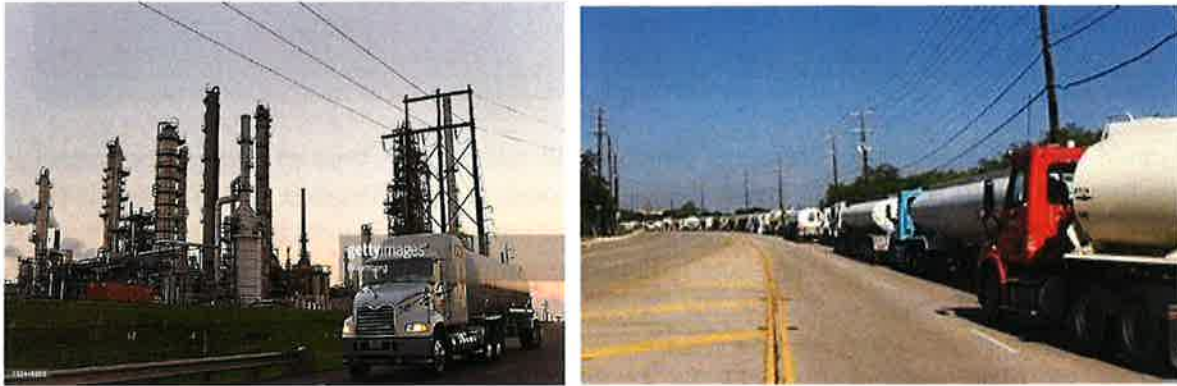


This could mean delays at road crossings which could cause issues with emergency personnel responding to calls; it could mean costly delays of moving crops to market. The few trains that do travel this track already cause a few local residents issues with ingress and egress to their own property from the public road. Then there is the noise pollution that interrupts the tranquility of our neighborhoods. A major concern is the characteristics of the proposed refinery site, (successful agricultural operations and sensitive wetland areas), are not suitable for a rail line used to transport fuels on an industrial scale. I believe the rail line activity will be in direct conflict with the surrounding agriculture and rural setting we currently have.



The county road that provides access to – and through – this neighborhood is not capable of handling the daily traffic this project will necessitate, especially in the construction phase. The NEXT website propounds that “over 5,000 jobs will be added during the construction phase” of this project. That is two and a half times the population of Clatskanie! (The job opportunities will obviously benefit more out-of-towners than locals.) Beaver Falls Road, Alston Mayger Road,

and Quincy Mayger Road are winding country roads that get beat up every year just by the local traffic and winter weather conditions – and the maintenance for these roads always remains a “job half done.” Just last month we had over 7 inches of snow in one night, which, after being plowed (the parts of the road that get plowed, that is) left many areas where the asphalt was covered with ice for days simply because it is old and the asphalt surface is not level enough to plow completely.



At a meeting with the Clatskanie City Council, Mr. Efirm stated that there would be *some* truck traffic. I worked at a small refinery in Billings, Montana that received upwards of 15-20 full sized semi-trucks daily to transport product to market. It will be impossible to ship all final product to distribution facilities in the heartland of our country via ship, because there are only 16 states that have Oil Ports. I would ask that you look at Wilcox and Flegel, in Longview, as an example of a distribution facility. There are several dozen tanker trucks coming in and out of the yard in Longview daily. The St Helens location has dozens a day, as well. Our quaint little agricultural neighborhood would be disrupted with all this extra traffic from heavy trucks on a small two-lane road that was not designed for heavy tractor-trailer traffic.

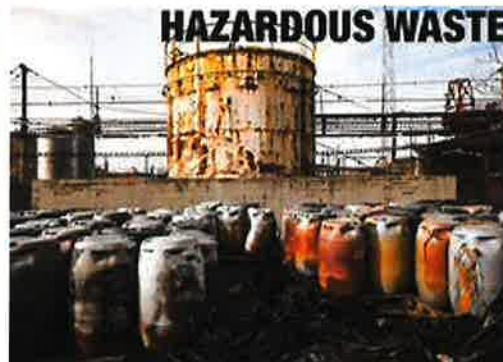
This proposed refinery is not water-dependent, although that would solve the train and truck issues. Many similar refineries throughout the US don't use water-based transportation and/or distribution systems at all. Just because the applicant desires to ship refined fuels by water to reduce their carbon intensity score doesn't make the facility water dependent. When a plant's production is enough to ship 50,000 barrels of final product a day, they will, more than likely, be using tanker ship, rail, and truck.





The proposed refinery does not compliment the character and development of the surrounding rural area in any way. I could live anywhere in this country but I chose this place because it is perfectly situated just far enough away from the big cities to be out of the sprawling asphalt jungle, yet near enough to support the occasional shopping and/or entertainment outings available only in a larger population area.

A specific concern which merits serious consideration is that Mr. Chris Efird, Founder, CEO, and Chairman of the Board of NEXT Renewables, was involved with a biodiesel project in Odessa Washington, Transmessis Columbia Plateau, LLC. Transmessis was shut down abruptly and all employees were terminated just 7 months after opening. The site was abandoned by Transmessis, resulting in the EPA designating it as an Emergency Response Site, where they performed an inventory and assessment of the chemicals that were left behind and improperly stored.



Not only was the site abandoned but they left with over 2 million dollars owing vendors, employees, and state taxes, (which were finally paid only after being taken to court). The clean-up of mishandled chemicals took courts and litigation to resolve. The failed project in Odessa, Washington is dwarfed by the proposed Port Westward facility by a hundred-fold. Just think of the potential damage a project like this could pose, only a few hundred yards from the waters of the Columbia River that supports both commercial and private traffic not to mention our protected and diminishing Salmon runs.



Another point of contention is the wetland mitigation required for the proposed refinery. This agricultural farmland that will be re-purposed and converted to a wetland will forever be lost to our local community for grazing, for agriculture, and for recreation. I happen to believe that we should be trying to preserve resources such as this, not deplete them, especially considering the current climate issues. It makes no sense to disturb acres of agricultural land to produce a product that supposedly will cause the climate to be better for... agriculture?

A question yet to be answered is why this project was not proposed for an already established industrial community such as the Longview/Kalama, Washington area? Oh, wait - perhaps it was! Perhaps the Port of Longview Commissioners did their homework and chose safety and honesty over the possibility of lots of cash in the Port coffers. Please see the following articles that are pertinent to this project.

<https://olywip.org/can-longview-oil-refinery-pass-due-diligence-an-examination-of-the-companies-and-individuals-behind-the-dubious-proposal/>

<https://www.columbiariverkeeper.org/news/2016/2/longview-oil-refinery-propane-terminal-are-dirty-dangerous>

[The Proposed Longview Refinery: Understanding the Basics - Sightline Institute](#)

That could explain why NEXT might try to steamroll the citizens of this little community, who seem to be in awe of the big ideas and the big promise of prosperity – without the little details (truth) of the end cost to our community.

Clatskanie Oregon has a current population of approximately 1,850 residents as of 2018. The Protect Oregon Farms group has collected nearly 600 signatures of local community members. Over 100 agricultural business and community organizations have said NO to NEXT. This represents nearly half of the community. If the County was listening to their constituents, they would realize that half of the community is against this project *in this location*. The County should pause and reflect upon the wishes of the community they represent.

Most of us realize business is essential to our survival. Any fair-minded person would agree that Clatskanie would receive immense financial benefit if this project is approved, completed and operational. It will be a boom for businesses, employment, and necessary revenue - for a

relatively short period of time. Mr. Efird has been open in his disclosure that this plant will be in operation for a mere 25 years. Possibly less than that, depending on how long it takes to bring the plant to full production - including propane and jet fuel.

The issue **we, the people** have, is that this proposed project, very simply, should not be at this location. Quincy is not the place to sacrifice for any refinery, least of all one that will become an empty shell in such a short period of time. Most of us agree that our ecologically sensitive, rich agricultural, and quiet neighborhoods (except for the occasional hunter's gunshots) is most definitely NOT the place for NEXT Renewable Fuels. I am not opposed to progress even in my own back yard, but "progress" should not come at a cost for future generations.

Respectfully,
Kevin Andrews