

FW: Testimony for NEXT Renewables LLC Permit Application

Robert Wheeldon <Robert.Wheeldon@columbiacountyor.gov>

Wed 1/26/2022 3:08 PM

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

Cc: Robin McIntyre <Robin.McIntyre@columbiacountyor.gov>; Jesse Winterowd <jesse@winterbrookplanning.com>



-----Original Message-----

From: Linda Horst <lindahorst45@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 1:14 PM

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

Subject: Testimony for NEXT Renewables LLC Permit Application

January 26, 2022

Columbia County Board of Commissioners
230 Strand Street
Columbia County Courthouse Annex
St Helens, OR 97051

RE: NEXT Renewables Fuels Oregon, LLC
(NEXT) Biodiesel Plant at Port Westward

Columbia County Board of Commissioners,

State boundaries provide no protection for Washington residents, such as myself, from pollution created in Oregon. Our shared airshed ensures we Washingtonians are just as vulnerable as our Oregonian neighbors. This is why I am actively opposing NEXT's refinery proposal at Port Westward.

It is my understanding that the Port wants to amend their lease agreement to remove the "no unit trains" provision. This request makes it obvious the Port and NEXT are asking for a 'blank check' on train use. They can't have it both ways claiming they are 'Water Dependent' so trains are INCIDENTAL and then in the same breath request 'Carte Blanche' on train use!

I urge this Board to be wary of this request. The semantics of whether it's a 'manifest' or 'unit' train is not the question. It's the number of train cars and number of trains per day! A typical Manifest train of 100 cars each at 85' in length would be well over a mile and a half long! Now, compound that with a Class-2 rail line maximum in-town freight speed of only 10mph! This is the reality this Board is expecting St Helens, Scappoose and Rainier to endure.

Consider how many rail crossings one long, slow train could tie up at the same time in these three towns divided by the P & W rail line! Each of these blocked rail crossings would cause significant traffic impacts delaying: emergency response of fire, police or EMS; the flow of commerce for local businesses; and public schools and residential commutes.

Years ago, when we were opposing the Millennium Coal Terminal, at issue were the mile and a half coal trains potentially blocking five crossings at once in our Longview industrial area. Joining us in our opposition was the Mayor of Rainier. His opposition was to the long, slow coal trains blocking his communities resident's access to emergency and health services in Longview.

This refinery would be an unwelcome, polluting intruder and is the antithesis of everything your Board's Mission Statement embodies: "Our Vision: We envision a peaceful community in which our residents are SAFE, HEALTHY and SECURE." (emphasis added) I am asking this Board to please honor this commitment that you have made to all the residents of Columbia County.

Sincerely,

Linda Horst
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Sent from my iPhone