

Peter Hwaschinsky 20361 || Merri rd

- Bio Fuel is a lie  
takes more energy to produce  
than it saves
- Jammed these proposals during  
COVID
- Im on Guinay Water ~~agifers~~  
agifers -  
they don't know how this  
project will effect ground water  
and agifers
- Earth Quake will happen
- Rail disasters !! they will happen
- insane traffic
- emergency services compromised
- Hanford is the most polluted site  
in America today.  
This is a fact.  
also ~~is~~ on the Columbia
- NEXT will never be good for water!  
• we have Water - beautiful clean water!
- east coast is toast for water  
midwest and west is fracked to death  
A major rivers are drying up.

One of my main concerns for this proposed rail yard is its effects on the groundwater and wetlands.

This area is diked and managed by the Beaver Drainage Improvement Company with a sensitive and complex infrastructure. It safeguards agricultural fields by managing water levels, drainage, and irrigation to everyone's benefit. Their approach works. It would be foolhardy to turn over part of that management to another entity's plan, especially one that requires 'more study' and may need to alter aspects such as pond design or culvert size further.

How could we be sure that what NEXT comes up with would work effectively? We can't. The BDIC's impressive work is important for the livelihoods of many of the people in this area, especially farmers, and it's working well. It would be a mistake to change it, or the buffer zone controlled by PGE.

I'm from Washington state and <sup>I believe</sup> at least one NEXT executive was closely associated with a company that <sup>failed &</sup> decamped and left us with a Superfund Site in Odessa, Washington, in 2014. NEXT's plans for this rail yard seem incomplete and not well thought out. Perhaps a lack of foresight like this is what brought down the refinery in Odessa. I don't know for sure, but I do know I would never give them an opportunity to mess up the highly functioning system you have going for you here.

Please deny this dubious proposal.

Diana Gordon  
642 I Street  
Washougal, WA 98671

[tndgardens@comcast.net](mailto:tndgardens@comcast.net)  
360-835-7748  
June 26, 2023

Good Evening Commissioners,

My wife and I live in Washougal, WA, and we want to make sure a company like NEXT can not put up a refinery in a nearby town whenever and wherever they want. Especially when the land owners of the land they want to build an expanded rail yard on near Port Westward have not given permission to do so.

The land itself at Port Westward is very susceptible to liquefaction, if and when an earthquake comes. In the next fifty years such a quake has at least a 30 % chance of occurring. The result would be ruptured rail cars and storage tanks as the ground shakes and turns to mud in the estimated 4 minute or longer quake.

Some executives with NEXT were involved in a biofuels plant in Odessa, WA, that shut down leaving sulfuric acid and other chemicals. \$400,000 was spent initially in clean up, unpaid suppliers were left in the lurch, and taxes were not paid.

Lastly, if NEXT or some other company can put a dangerous refinery in Port Westward with the lure of jobs, they might try it in our home town upstream the Columbia River from yours. We don't want that in your town or ours.

Tom Gordon

642 I Street

Washougal, WA

98671

tdgardens@comcast.net

June 26, 2023

Columbia County Planning Commission Public Hearing

Testimony Submitted by:

Greg Pettit, 34538 Keliher Drive, Warren OR, 97053

Re: NEXT Energy Proposal for expanded rail yard at Port Westward.

I strongly urge the Planning Commission to deny NEXT's proposed modification of the prior approval for the refinery to include a new rail yard with miles of tracks at Port Westward for the following reasons:

- 1) NEXT has not provided adequate detail regarding their proposed modification for the Planning Commission to make a well-informed decision regarding the impacts of the proposal. This would include impacts on; the Beaver Drainage District, people who live in the community, local agricultural industry, traffic impacts along Hwy 30 including the communities of Scappoose, St. Helens, Rainier and Clatskanie, and impacts to emergency services due to train blocked access to major populations. As just one example of many issues. In order to evaluate these concerns, the Commission needs to know; the number of trains per month that would use the facility, their length, their cargo, and times day they would transit urban areas.
- 2) The proposal does not meet the requirements of Columbia County zoning ordinance. I will not repeat them all here, but Columbia River Keepers has submitted specific examples of information the Planning Commission would need to evaluate the proposals compliance with the ordinance.
- 3) NEXT has not demonstrated a need for the facility. NEXT has promised the public in the past, and the current agreement with the Port of Columbia County requires, that all raw processing feedstock, and the export of final renewable fuels will be done in and out of Port Westward by ship. This being so, what would this railyard be used for? One explanation I have heard is in case Columbia shuts down. When did that happen? And it still does not negate the Commissions due diligence obligations to address legitimate concerns raised in this process.

I am personally in favor of finding additional commercial uses of Port Westward that can enhance the economy of the north county and provide living wage family jobs. But such enterprises must also be compatible with the livability of our county, which is why so many of us enjoy living here and will ultimately be our greatest economic asset. They must also be based on a sound economic plan, and without multiple risks of failure. Port Westward has a long history of proposed commercial ventures, promising jobs, and tax bases. Over 75 million in public dollars have been spent on Port Westward infrastructure projects in the last 20 years to accommodate the needs of these proposals with little to show in return. There are good reasons why many of these proposals have been rejected elsewhere and not here. We have not met our responsibilities in evaluating the risks and benefits of the proposals. We have been enraptured by greed and blind to risk.

Sincerely,  
Greg Pettit

County Commission  
PLANNING

Wendy Schmidt  
19396 HERMO RD.  
CLATSkanie (Quincy) June 26, 2023

In 1920 The Army Corp of Engineers did extensive research on dikes and levees in creating what is known today as The Beaver Drainage Improvement Company (BDIC).

Next wants to modify their land use permit without due diligence in testing the site area for the feasibility of their proposed project. The dike lands are WETLANDS! One small disruption to the dikes can cause a multitude of problems throughout the district; one farm will flood and the neighboring farm will have trouble getting enough water to irrigate their crops.

I have 25 acres within the BDIC and my neighbor recently had a culvert installed to access his crops for harvesting. By installing the culvert, the water level of the slough along my property line dropped 4 feet in 48 hours and still has not returned to a workable level to contain my neighbors cattle. With the slough so low, one of my sheep, thinking he could cross, got caught in the muck and drown.

Next's proposal entails filling and relocating multiple ditches within the BDIC. The impact this will have on the neighboring farmland would be catastrophic! The purpose of our dike lands is flood control and drainage. And the purpose of the BDIC is to protect the agricultural lands within.

*1 mile*  
Adding a rail yard would destroy our dikes, already below FEMA regulation. One 100 car fuel train fully loaded, if you do the math, would weigh approximately 19,230,400 LBS. The soil within the BDIC is a combination of silt, sand and clay. Depending where you are, the elevation is between 3-15 feet above sea level. The soil can readily liquify and flood. Let me remind you, we are in a Flood Zone along a major River, The Columbia

Next has failed to address the impact the rail yard and their Renewable Fuel Refinery would have on the drainage, waterways and groundwater within the BDIC and the conflicting needs of the agricultural neighbors around them. The prior approval of their rail yard proposal was reversed by LUBA and the land in question for their current proposal is not within their jurisdiction. ~~The Port land is owned/ leased/ maintained by the BDIC and RG&E.~~ Next has no agreement to use this land.

Therefore, The proposed modification should be denied.

*THE PORT OWNS LAND IS LEASED BY PG+E FOR 99 YRS  
& IS MAINTAINED BY PG+E + THE BDIC.*

To The Columbia County Planning Commission  
Regarding NEXT's request for a Rail Yard

June 26, 2023

As planning commissioners with the job of applying local criteria to this application, you have a difficult task at hand. Even the most basic facts are unclear. I have followed NEXT since they first came to Columbia County around 2010. Back then they called themselves Waterside. They were headed by Lou Soumas and proposed to make renewable diesel from used cooking oil. The plan was intriguing. Although, at the time, (and still to this day) their only project was the failed Odessa, WA project which became a super-fund site. Since then, Mr. Soumas left, the company changed its name to NEXT, then NXT, all or most of the board members have left, they changed the product to automotive diesel, they changed the ingredients to "fish grease" or perhaps some other, unspecified product (Mr. Efid said feedstock from Asia is a "knife fight" since BP has cornered the market), and their promise to "ship in/ ship out" now needs a massive rail yard.

In their most recent SEC filing, NEXT acknowledged "Our management team has limited experience running a public company." Yet they asserted they asserted they have the support of this community. They do not. Quite frankly, how could they? What is it they think we, the community support? When my friends ask me about NEXT's plans, what am I to say? It seems that everything I thought I knew about them has changed, and they rely on previous permits and agreements based on discontinued facts. They change what they want to make and they don't know where they will get the ingredients to make it, or how they will get them here. However, we all see the issues of traffic congestion in Scappoose and St. Helens. If we were to ask the community if they support a massive increase in rail traffic, I imagine there'd be little support. Since NEXT no longer plans to "Ship in," will they, perhaps, decide to no longer "Ship out"? Does the community support miles of trains of some extremely flammable material leaving our county?

As you look at the criteria you must use to decide whether or not this proposal meets your approval, what facts will you use? What assurance do you have that the plan is really the plan? Twelve years is a long time for them to still not have a solid plan, or community support.

Perhaps I've become cynical in my old age. To me this looks like an old-fashioned shell game. Except that I don't even think there's a shell.

Sincerely,  
Annie Christensen  
35234 Hazel Street  
St. Helens, OR 97051

FONT



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*Spotlight  
9/4/2018*

# Energy company pitches biofuel plant

Courtney Vaughn Tuesday, September 04, 2018

0 Comments

## NEXT Energy wants to develop 80-acre site near Port Westward, hire 210 people

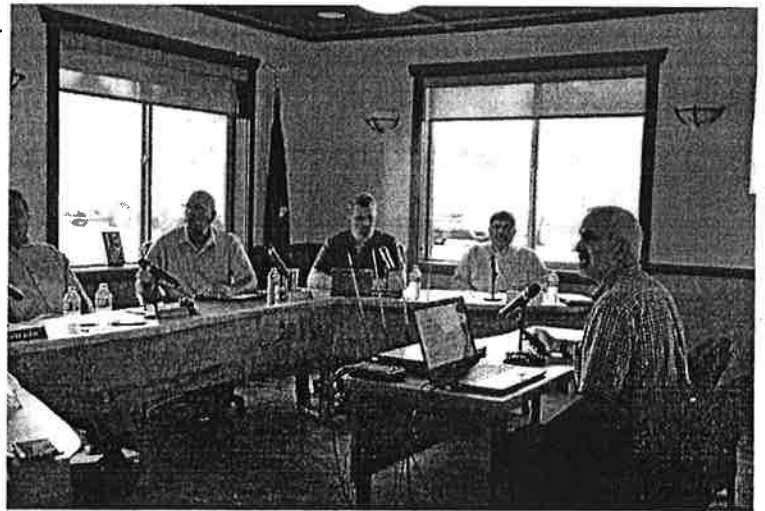
A \$1.1 billion fuel production facility proposed for Port Westward is inching closer to reality.

(<http://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003617884882-0773.jpg>)NEXT Energy Group, Inc. announced plans in July for a new renewable fuel production site that would yield 37,500 barrels a day of renewable diesel and propane, along with "green jet fuels."

The company is currently scoping out land owned by the Port of Columbia County in Clatskanie, near the Port Westward Industrial Park.

If the project is approved, it would be the largest renewable fuel center in North America, according to NEXT Energy.

Port commissioners got an overview of the ambitious project Wednesday, Aug. 22 and are slated to review and vote on a site development and option to lease with the company in the coming months.



SPOTLIGHT PHOTO: COURTNEY VAUGHN - Port commissioners listen to a presentation from Lou Soumas of NEXT Energy Group, Inc. NEXT Energy is proposing a \$1.1 billion renewable fuel processing plant in Clatskanie.

"We're very interested in the Port Westward site," Lou Soumas of NEXT Energy told the Spotlight in July. "We like Columbia County. We've looked at that county with some other projects in the past, but because they were more rail dependent, we couldn't locate there."

As proposed, NEXT Energy would construct a new site on an 80 acre property owned by the port and employ about 210 people at wages ranging from \$42,000 to \$200,000, with an average wage of \$78,000. Soumas stressed that NEXT Energy would seek out the majority of its employees from Columbia County.

The property is currently part of an 837-acre parcel map amendment and rezone request being taken up by the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals.

"At this point, you don't really have land you could lease that's zoned properly," Soumas told port commissioners Wednesday.

"If this project were to go live as we're currently hoping in the summer of 2021, we'd have people out there by 2020," Soumas said.

NEXT Energy would produce what it calls "second generation advanced biofuel" made from renewable feedstock like vegetable oils, animal fats and used cooking oil. The result is cleaner and more pure than biodiesel, the company claims.

"Because we're working with organic oil, you don't get all the stuff that comes out of typical fuel," Soumas said.

Fuel product and feedstock would be shipped in and out by barge, according to the project proposal.

The project isn't guaranteed to be developed in Columbia County, but the port says the Clatskanie site is currently the only one being considered by the company. Furthermore, NEXT Energy representatives have been quietly meeting with county and city officials to talk about the proposal and bring them up to speed.

(<http://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003617884926-0773.jpg>)While the promise of local, family wage jobs and top notch safety monitoring procedures at the site were heavily emphasized, what impressed commissioners was the energy company's claims that it will not seek tax abatement programs, as many large scale companies do when they set up shop in Columbia County.

"This project becomes a member of the community, so it needs to pay its fair share," Soumas said.

"I really appreciate your views on tax abatement," Commissioner Larry Ericksen told Soumas. "It sounds like you really understand how important [tax revenue] is to our county."



PORT OF COLUMBIA COUNTY PHOTO - Existing dock infrastructure and storage tanks would be utilized by NEXT Energy if the company proceeds with a new fuel processing plant near Port Westward.

### Company has ties to failed projects

NEXT Energy also has operated as Waterside Energy and Riverside Energy, and representatives have also been connected to several other company names, including Transmessis Columbia Plateau, LLC.

In 2015, Transmessis Columbia Plateau was the subject of a lawsuit alleging nearly \$1.7 million in unpaid invoices for canola seed deliveries.

Waterside was also at the center of a controversial renewable fuel plant in Odessa, Wash., which was fraught with environmental violations.

Soumas said his company was asked to come in and help clean up the site and turn it around, but left shortly afterward.

"We cleaned the place up and operated for about six months and found out that a lot of the representations made were [not truthful]," Soumas explained. Soumas said his energy company cleaned up the site and "handed it back," but a 2016 news report from OPB (<https://www.opb.org/news/article/columbia-river-environment-cleanup-bills-refinery-energy/>) indicates Waterside abandoned the site and laid off workers without notifying state regulators.

0 Comments

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Columbia County Land Development Services  
Attn: Planning  
230 Strand Street  
St. Helens, Oregon 97051

June 23, 2023

RE: Public Hearing CC23-1807 June 26, 2023  
Modification of Prior Approval – Site Design Review and Variance (DR 21-03/V 21-05  
Re-design and re-location of Railroad Yard at Port Westward (N-e-x-t)

PUBLIC COMMENT from Sandra Moilanen; 79330 Stewart Creek Road; Clatskanie, Oregon 97016

I believe Notice of this Public Hearing was NOT adequate. (Published June 16, 2023 in Chief).

I allege this violates Oregon's statutes for timely notice. I believe 10 or more full working days prior to date of Hearing are required: June 17, Saturday and June 18, Sunday are not counted. June 19<sup>th</sup> (Juneteenth), Monday was a Federal Holiday.

I count June 16, Friday; June 20, 21, 22, 23 (Tuesday-Friday); and June 26 (Monday) = 6 days or 7 days.

NOTE: I request The Planning Commission allow an extra 7-10 days for public comment and mail delivery time.

1) IMPACTS TO RESIDENTS and BUSINESSES

a) Traffic flow will be disrupted by railroad crossings 7-12 minutes at each county road. These disruptions will interfere with Emergency Ambulance and Fire and Rescue in all of Columbia County, resulting in more deaths and significant property damages.

Whose lives will be lost? Whose homes or businesses will burn down?

NOTE: I waited 10 minutes at Mayger Fill crossing.

I waited 11-12 minutes at Kallunki Road crossing due to current rail traffic.

THIS CONTRADICTS N-e-x-t's estimate of 7.5 minutes.

b) School buses and emergency services, such as police and fire in Scappoose and St. Helens, are separated by the railroad.

c) Downtown Rainier's business district is divided by the railroad. Customers, deliveries of products and supplies will be affected. Other rural businesses such as logging and farming will be impacted.

NOTE: 50 crossings X 10 minutes = 500 minutes for 1 incoming train = 1000 minutes round trip = 16 hours of blocked railroad crossings!

How many \$ MILLIONS of Dollars will residents and businesses LOSE while waiting to accommodate trains?

2) MAINTENANCE ISSUES of railroad tracks have been on-going. My photos demonstrate the poor condition of rail ties, as noted in my recent photos at Kallunki and Mayger Fill crossings. (encl)

NOTE: only some rail ties are being replaced while others with significant damage remains. Some are disintegrated into shreds of wood.

WHO will inspect and assure that Federal safety standards are followed? When? How?

The Columbia River is adjacent to the railroad in many places that are not accessible for Clean-up of hazardous spills.

PUBLIC COMMENT CC23-1807 cont. by Sandra Moilanen of Clatskanie, Oregon

- 3) Current trains carrying hazardous chemicals are not all to Federal standards, which requires thicker steel with additional reinforcement. When will these be required? How can residents be assured that our properties and lives will not be at risk with significant increase in trains?
- 4) Quincy-Mayger ROADS are narrow, very curvy 2-lanes without shoulders. Increased industrial traffic poses a serious danger to drivers, pedestrians, children waiting for buses, livestock, pets. Quincy Market, located at Hermo Rd. is the center of about 70 homes and the Zen Monastery. Speeding vehicles are already a problem in this congested area.
- 5) HISTORIC FLOODS with boils, saturation of soils occurs on the Beaver Drainage flood plain. Hermo Road is lower than the dike road and is subject to tidal flooding when ditches are not draining. Will new road base elevate it above 1996 and 1962 flood levels? Will it be paved?
- 6) Where is disposal of contaminated industrial wastewater? What quantities are expected?
- 7) What is source of alleged domestic water supply? I am not aware of any available resource that can accommodate an industrial facility.

I urge you to DENY this variance and deny the permit. This industrial complex is not compatible with our quiet, peaceful, slow pace of rural living. Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,

*Sandra Moilanen*

Sandra Moilanen  
79330 Stewart Creek Rd.  
Clatskanie, Oregon 97016

Attachments:

- 4 pg photos railroad tracks - Kallunki crossing
- 3 photos Rainier (1 pg)
- 1 Hermo Rd.
- 1 Mayger Rd

*C. 6/26/23*

Quincy Market at Hermo Rd



Water on both sides of train - Kallunki's



Junction w/ Quincy - Sawyer Rd



I waited - Port Westward entry



Sandra Mollanen 6-26-73

10-12 minutes Kallunki Road

Mayger - Columbia River in near Beach



Railcars - Quincy - Mayger Rd. ←



Columbia River ship channel - Train blocked me 10 minutes  
Sandra Molanen 6-26-25

Note:  
Condition  
Not  
marked  
to  
replace



→  
ONE  
BOLT  
OR  
TIE

Kallunki  
crossing  
2023

Mott

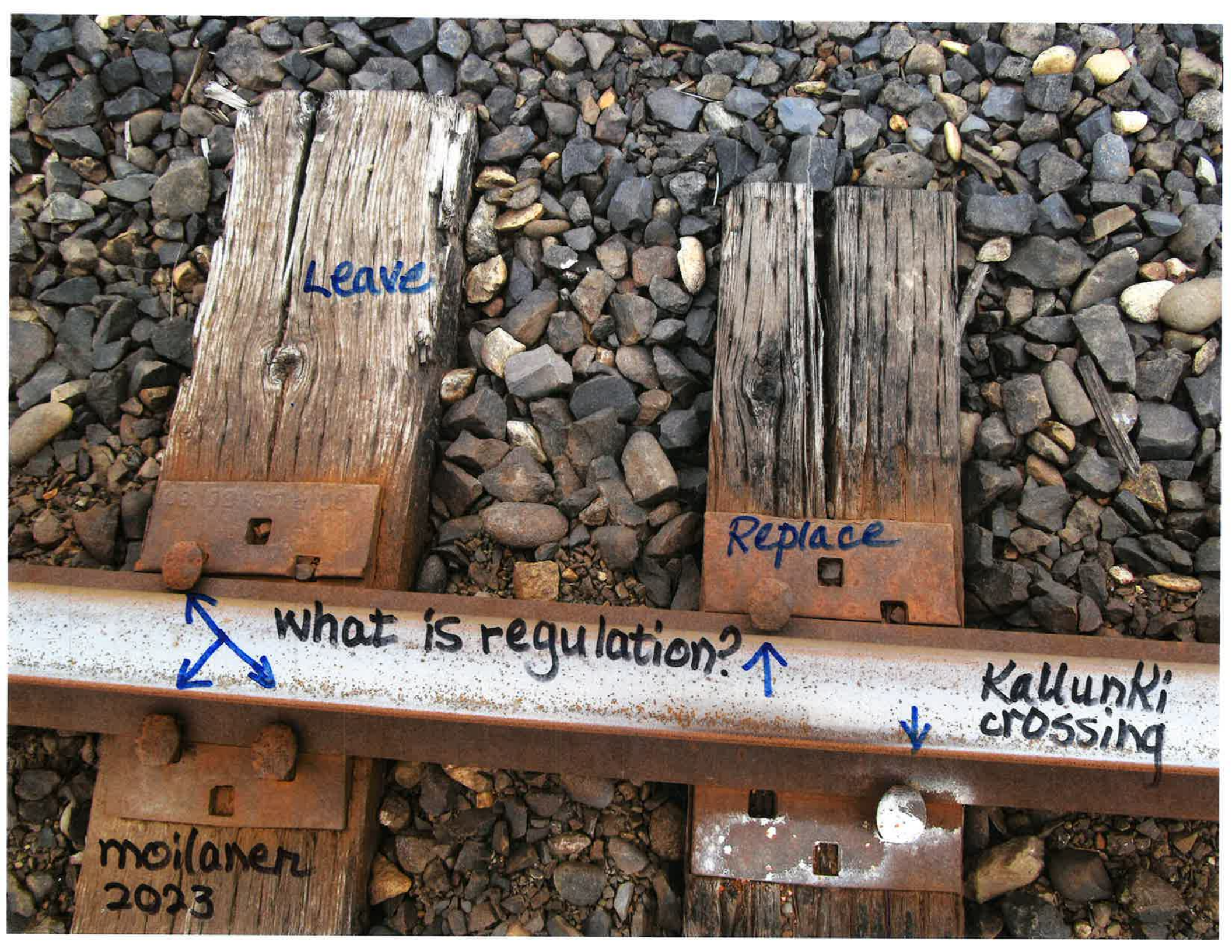
Leave

Replace

What is regulation?

Kallunki  
crossing

moilanen  
2023





Wassersch...

Mortis

Moil

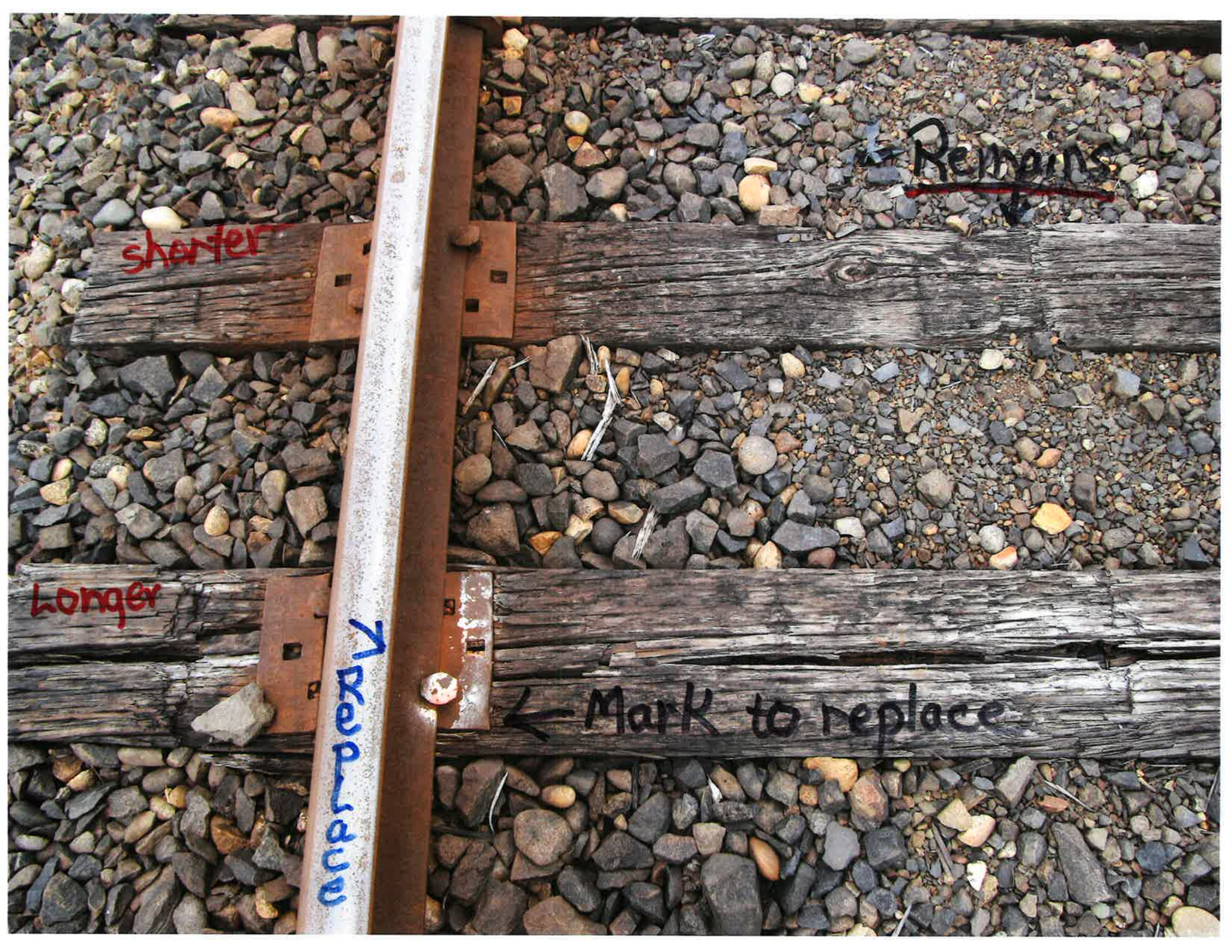
shorter

← Remains

longer

→ replace

← Mark to replace





multiple crossings  
Downtown Rainier Oregon  
East ↗



2023

SANDRA

MOILANEN

Highway 30  
1 Block



RAILROAD  
CROSSING

Rainier Hardware

Downtown Rainier - Railroad  
intersects core business district

South ↑ west

Sandra Meilanen 6-26-23

Rainier, Oregon

Looking West

- Senior Housing
- post office
- Hardware
- Restaurant etc.



Sandra

Moilanen

2023