

Ituna Environmental Club

My name is Ryan Welch. I'm the President of Skyview High School's Chapter of the Ituna Environmental Club. It's now the largest youth-led environmental activism group in Southwest Washington. It's with an eye on the future of my generation, and of those to come, that I'm speaking today in opposition of the proposed Kalama methanol refinery.

Ecology's analysis has improved since the initial report, but it remains far too speculative. In addition to the uncertainty shown right up front in the sensitivity analysis, there is a huge unanswered question in the form of burning methane. Northwest Innovation Works originally stated that none of the methanol that their fracked gas facility produced would be burned for power. Now they've quietly flip-flopped, but they haven't provided a solid figure for how much might be burned. We can't afford any increase in co2 emission and the fact that we still don't know what the increase would be is damning. Now, in reading the EIS, it seems like the entire argument revolves around the world having two possible sources of energy, Columbia methanol, or worse sources environmentally, and this is a dangerous false dichotomy. We don't have to accept a future that's powered by fossil fuels.

If the supporters of Columbia methanol truly stand by it because of procedure environmental benefits, then why not go one step further? We can replace methanol in any form with renewable energy sources. Really that is the only choice we have now to avert climate collapse. This is not a complicated decision. It boils down to this. Will Ecology stand up for the health and well-being of Washingtonians or will they bend to the wishes of those who consistently mislead state regulators?

The climate crisis filled our skies with smoke not even a week ago. This project would only accelerate environmental damage to the stage. We're in a climate emergency, which means that half measures won't cut it. We demand a clean future, not a cleaner future. Ecology must reject Northwest Innovation Works' proposal. Thank you.