

Vikki Nelson

My name is Vickie and I'm a new resident of Kalama and Cowlitz County. I am asking the Department of Ecology to reject this project. I am greatly disheartened to see that state and county officials clearly have no interest in protecting the residents this county, nor in providing safe long-term jobs and innovative and growing industries.

Northwest Innovation Works is a dubious company that is primarily backed by the Chinese government, and according to documents obtained by OPB, has been telling different stories to different interest groups. While it has been telling Washington officials that this plant would mainly produce plastic, it has been telling Chinese investors that it will play a large role in feeding China's insatiable fuel appetite. Company stakeholders are lying to US officials and fully intend to use this plant primarily for burning fuel, making this environmental assessment invalid.

Another issue is that the current pipelines that transport methane gas from Whatcom County lack the capacity to supply the plant. This means that an entirely new pipeline would need to be built along the length of I-5, requiring the use of eminent domain to remove citizens from their homes and significantly increasing the risk of methane leaks. According to a study done by the Environmental Defense Fund, a methane leak rate of even 3% would result in significant climactic damage. There are no reliable studies that show that any methanol company has been successful in limiting these leaks. Even the current DEQ study has estimated leakage rate of at least 3%, or about nine million cubic feet of methane per day.

Furthermore, this project is a dud and will not lead to long-term job growth or stimulus. Countless economists and studies have shown that there is a glut of fossil fuels on the market, and so many of them are struggling to be profitable that they must rely on taxpayer subsidies. Northwest Innovation is no different and has already applied for a two-billion-dollar loan guarantee from the US Department of Energy. By the time this plant comes online it will be losing money, leaving US taxpayers with the bill. Fracking in gas is on its way out; we should not be part of a dying and destructive industry.

Finally, methanol is a highly toxic flammable and volatile compound. It is not only capable of causing an explosion that would destroy the town of Kalama, but loose methanol can also cause toxic gas vapor clouds that can travel with the wind.