

Elijah Cetas

Greetings,

My name is Elijah Cetas, I live in Portland, Oregon, and organize with Sunrise movement.

As a young person, a conservationist and a fisherman, I strongly oppose this project.

Alone, the risks and impacts to endangered salmon and steelhead runs of the Columbia river make it a nonstarter.

I understand why Ecology has included an assessment of whether Kalama might displace coal plants in China. Global greenhouse gas mitigation is complicated. But what I fail to understand is why this was the only future scenario that Ecology explored. What led this agency to ignore and not assess other potential futures that might not include releasing 40-million tons of added CO₂? As a young person who will face the impacts of the climate crisis throughout my lifetime, it is deeply important to me to acknowledge that this project would emit the equivalent to 8.6 million new vehicles on the road, or 10 new coal fired power plants. Longterm projects cannot ignore immediate impacts.

One likely and dismal future Ecology might have explored is one where global plastic production increases. China continues to produce methanol from coal, while new pipelines are built to supply Kalama Methanol. New plastic facilities open in the U.S and abroad. The plastic industry - an investment haven for fossil fuel companies intent on maintaining fossil fuel profits in spite of climate change - this industry continues to undercut sustainable alternatives and choke our oceans with debris. Meanwhile, under this future scenario, we in the Pacific Northwest still see the price of gas in our homes driven up by this project's monopolistic control of regional gas supply lines.

Then again, the opposite eventuality could occur. At much cost to the local ecosystems and our clean water, let's say this facility is built and operates for five years. Then, before the coal plants go down in China, a climate disaster, another pandemic, a spate of wildfires, or a plastic alternative emerges, driving down demand for fracked gas while the global supply becomes glutted. Eventually the Kalama Methanol project closes, after a short lifespan of wasted greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, we are left to clean up the mess. And for what?

This is of course exactly what we are witnessing with the oil industry during the Covid-19 pandemic. Flotillas of oil storage vessels are currently waiting off our coasts, while global demand stagnates. Fracking fields have been abandoned, wellheads are improperly closed and leaking methane, and the companies responsible are avoiding cleaning them up.

Why is Ecology propping up the straw man argument of a foreign company, intent on using out of state workers and fanciful financial speculations to degrade our local resources and imperil our communities health and safety in order to extract profit for a multinational corporation and its foreign bank accounts?

What would it look like for Ecology to take our the immediacy of the climate crisis seriously, and analyze other likely scenarios? Perhaps even imagining the greenhouse gas benefits of not building

this plant, and instead investing in renewable energy, in environmental restoration, and deconstruction and retrofitting jobs that help prevent disaster from the Cascadia earthquake. This work of community resiliency isn't going away in our lifetimes. Yet when a project like Kalama Methanol is proposed, we have to fight that much harder to see climate resilient investments in lieu of fossil fuel projects.

Facing these complexities, Ecology must return to its mission: protect the health of local lands and communities. Reject this project and demonstrate the many good reasons to use our waterways and ports for other purposes.

Thank you,

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