

Elijah Cetes

Greetings. My name is Elijah [inaudible]. I live in Portland, Oregon. As a young person, a conservationist, and a fisherman, I strongly oppose this project. Although the risks and impacts to endangered salmon and steelhead runs on the Columbia River should make it a non-starter, I understand why Ecology has included this 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. Did this agency lack the imagination to assess other potential futures that might not include releasing 40 million tons of added CO₂? Because I think we need to remember that whatever the potential offsets are, that amount is equivalent to 8.6 million new vehicles on the road. It's equivalent to 10 new coal-fired power plants.

One likely and dismal future you might have explored is one where global plastic production increases. China continues to produce methanol from coal, while new pipelines are still built to supply Kalama. [sound cut] New plastic facilities open. The plastic industry, which is notoriously a haven for fossil fuel companies clinging to profits, continues to undercut sustainable alternatives to plastic and our oceans continue to be choked with debris. Meanwhile, we in the Pacific Northwest will still see the price of gas in our homes increase, driven up by this project's monopolistic control of our gas supply lines.

Then again, another scenario could be the opposite occurs. At much cost to local East Coast systems and clean water, the facility is [sound cut] built and operates for five years. Then before the coal plants can go down in China, a climate disaster, a pandemic, a wildfire, or a plastic alternative emerges driving down demand for fracked gas while the supply lines become glutted. Eventually, the project closes after a short lifespan. 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-