

Phillip Englund

Dear Department of Ecology,

We are in a worsening and undeniable climate crisis. Every year now, we break heat records. Three years ago, in 2017, I stood with my father at a lookout point at midnight, watching what was happening across the Columbia river. I described it thusly at the time: "[There were] gigantic flare-ups, massive pillars of flame as trees exploded. A significant swath of the horizon just orange and spreading at a tremendous rate, burning so brightly that when we walked back down the trail it looked like kind of a faux-sunrise out of direct view; we could even see the fire from our deck when we got home around one-thirty. Some sort of apocalypse come to Oregon." That was the Eagle Creek fire. I'll never forget my Dad telling me that if the winds shifted and the fire jumped the river, we would have to evacuate.

This year, the entire west coast has gone up in flames. Here in Washington, 330,000 acres burned in a *single day.* 40,000 people had to evacuate their homes in Oregon. Millions of acres have been lost, I don't know how many homes, and the wildfires are still ongoing... as of this writing, an article published half an hour ago reports that nearly 70,000 people have had to be evacuated in Northern California. These numbers are so unthinkable enormous that they're almost difficult to comprehend. It doesn't seem real. And yet this *is* our reality.

I personally had a scare when a brush fire started very close to my parent's house in Washougal (from which I have since moved out), but as happened in 2017, we were lucky--the wind was blowing in the right direction and kept it from spreading. It was brought under control. Luck, however, runs out sooner or later; I don't know how many more times we can roll these dice. And even though we've been fortuitous enough to dodge the horrors of facing unstoppable flames to date, all of the Vancouver/Portland area and beyond was choking on smoke for at least a week, the air plunging far past the uppermost "hazardous" level on the Air Quality Index, to a point of toxicity *which didn't even have a designation.* God only knows how that will affect people's health in the long term, especially those with poor shelter or none at all. Smoke from our wildfires reached the east coast, and even Europe. This is not an aberration--thanks to the ungodly amount of greenhouse gas emissions we've already put into the atmosphere, this is going to be the new normal, and it's going to get worse and worse unless we take bold and immediate action to put the brakes on climate collapse.

Suffice it to say that such bold and immediate action does NOT include building, or allowing to be built, the world's largest methanol refinery in Kalama. It would use more gas--and necessitate more fracking--than all the Northwest's biggest cities combined and all the power plants in Washington. The facility would cause around 4.6 million tons of carbon pollution each year (and up to 9.4 million tons by some estimates), and become one of the largest greenhouse gas emitters in the state. In our current climate emergency, that is purely and simply unconscionable.

Having attended one of the comment sessions for the second supplemental EIS, it seems clear that supporters of this awful project have only two arguments, and neither of them are good. The first is, of course, predicated on employment: the refinery would bring lots of jobs into the area, and people need jobs. This, taken in a vacuum and absent anything else, is true. However: besides ignoring the

fact that this refinery would spell complete ecological disaster, what's frustrating is that these kinds of arguments always carry an implied assumption that a large-scale, rapid transition to green energy (i.e. what we need in order to save ourselves and maintain a habitable planet) somehow wouldn't just as easily bring with it a ton of well-paying jobs. It absolutely would. Kalama does not need to settle for jobs which only serve to hasten the complete destruction of our environment; Kalama deserves better.

Still, I am not a resident of Kalama, and jobs there are not my perview. Nor are they the perview of the Department of Ecology. So let us move on to what is more pertinent.

The second argument is the far, far worse of the two--while I can believe the jobs argument is misguided, I can also believe it is made in good faith. This one, on the other hand, is insidious, duplicitous, and completely outrageous. It is a point of view designed specifically to greenwash, to hoodwink people and peddle a dangerous mirage, and to this end it uses and highlights what is so tremendously flawed about the Second Supplemental EIS itself.

The argument in question claims that the proposed Kalama refinery, unimaginable polluter though it may be (and its proponents do concede that point), is somehow GOOD for the environment.

During the presentation which preceded the online hearings on this matter, an incredibly misleading graph was displayed in regards to the Department of Ecology's findings, portraying how much pollution would allegedly occur **with** the Kalama refinery (a smaller bar) as opposed to **without** the Kalama refinery (a larger bar). Stated on your website under "Preliminary Report Findings" is the justification for that display: "Worldwide demand for methanol is likely to increase in the decades ahead, leading to higher greenhouse gas emissions with or without the Kalama facility... Methanol made in Kalama could produce lower greenhouse gas emissions than many competing methanol supplies, from coal or less efficient natural gas sources. This means that global greenhouse emissions would increase with the addition of the Kalama facility, but likely less than they might if the demand was met by other sources."

This conclusion was reached, according to the aforementioned presentation, by considering such things as "economic analysis" and "market speculation." Or, translated into plain language--bullshit.

Said graph and associated statements are not indicative of any sort of reality; rather they represent pure, irresponsible guesswork. They're part and parcel of a capitalist shell-game, trying to bamboozle the audience into believing there's a positive outcome under a cup where actually none exists anywhere (and it therefore becomes an easily deployed tool for gaslighting from certain unscrupulous quarters: "You've already won this, climate people! Don't you see? The project will actually **help** the environment, so why would you want to fight it?").

To be clear: the ONLY thing the Kalama methanol facility will do is add a massive amount of emissions on top of already-existing emissions. Any other outcome is noticeably propped up using such slippery qualifiers as "likely," "could," and "if". Should this monstrosity be built, it doesn't replace a competitor--some coal or natural gas plant in China doesn't just magically shut down or disappear. Nor would its existence somehow deter other "less-efficient" sources from trying to crop up, particularly if there is indeed this claimed rising demand (which I'll address in a moment). The proposed refinery is in no way, shape, or form the lesser evil or a step in the right direction. NOTHING is reduced. Only increased by a suicidal amount.

And that brings us to this idea that the demand for methanol is likely going to rise. And my response to that is: of COURSE it is if projects such as the Kalama refinery are allowed. It's the very definition of a self-fulfilling prophecy. And since we're already into the realm of speculation, allow me to project a different scenario, just as plausible--if supply is replaced by better alternatives, demand for methanol will go down and go up for said alternatives. The most terrible options don't have to be foregone conclusions.

Finally there is the mitigation aspect to consider, another piece of deception meant to lull people into complacency. Northwest Innovation Works is claiming it will mitigate all in-state (but not out-of-state) emissions. This is not only vague and utterly, utterly insufficient, it is also completely unenforceable. NWIW has already proven themselves to be flagrant, completely unscrupulous liars. They repeatedly claimed to regulators that the purpose of the refinery was purely for the production of plastics, while openly telling their investors that the methanol produced would be burned for fuel in China! Why on earth should this sleazy company be trusted to even do the bare minimum to mitigate anything? Their fundamental dishonesty should have killed the proposed project by default the second it came to light in 2019.

All of this is to say, stopping the Kalama methanol refinery is a moral imperative for the well-being of our beautiful Pacific Northwest, our country, and our planet. The evidence against it is overwhelming. I urge you in the strongest terms possible: please do the right thing, for current generations and generations to come, and reject the shoreline permit.

Our future depends on this.

Thank you for your time,

Phillip Englund