

Laura Bauer

I am submitting the attached comments addressing just one of my many concerns with NWIW's proposed methanol plant in Kalama, WA.

October 6, 2020

Dear Director Watson and Department of Ecology ,

I am writing today to ask you to deny the necessary permits for NWIW's proposed methanol plant in Kalama, Washington. I have written and spoken publicly at hearings in the past about the air pollution and related public health concerns that would result from this refinery.

There is grave concern regarding the pollutants both upstream and down caused by fracking, pipeline transport of natural gas as well as ship transport of the finished product. Equally important is the direct effect of air pollutants from the refinery's immediate emissions on the citizens of Kalama and nearby communities.

Carbon dioxide, Sulfur dioxide and Nitrous gases, heavy metals and particulate matter will be discharged into the air above Kalama. CO₂ is the topic of much discussion related to the health of the local and global climate. Of particular concern to me are the particulates, especially the fine particulate pollutants known as pm 10's and pm 2.5's. Particulate matter, especially as it is related to diesel fuel consumption is addressed in the SEPA. I urge you to consider that current "acceptable" exposure levels are based upon modeling and projected emission levels, not any actual measured data from a similar plant in a similar location. A growing body of evidence suggests that current acceptable exposure levels, despite the margin that is built into the models to accommodate sensitive populations is too high. Health issues attributed to exposure over time to pm 10's and 2.5's include respiratory and cardiac disease, cancer of the lungs and blood cancer, low birth weight and premature birth. Studies conducted in the last 10 years suggest that the damage cascades that lead to disease occur at much lower levels than previous data from a decade earlier indicated.

Multiple publications and meta-analyses published in peer reviewed scientific and medical journals between 2012 and 2020 underscore these threats to human health as well as other species. Despite exhaustive literature searches, I find a paucity of research documenting the safety of human health at current levels of short and long term exposure to the air pollutants discussed here. Additionally, since NWIW submitted projected emission levels based upon untested technology, they have been able to avoid direct air quality monitoring in Kalama. The citizens of Kalama at least deserve reliable, direct monitoring of the emissions this plant would create.

Kalama is a lovely small community on the Columbia River. Along with shipping and other industrial river traffic, significant rail and highway arteries run through the community. The Port of Kalama, local small mill operations, Steelscape and the Chemical plant all contribute to current local emissions levels. These existing sources are likely to grow substantially independent of the methanol plant. Mitigation for those sources is likely to be limited to the development of more fuel efficient highway traffic. Today we breathe whatever emissions are generated by these existing sources. Adding a methanol refinery would push those levels to an unacceptable level for the health of Kalama citizens not only today but for 40 years into the future.

What recourse would the citizens of Kalama have if healthy levels are much lower as indicated by more recent research? What recourse would the citizens of Kalama have if the actual emissions from the plant are higher than projected? Our experiences along the Columbia with Hanford, Reynolds Aluminum, and other industries engender no trust they will protect our environment and our health.

I urge you, for the health of the citizens of Kalama to say no to permitting the NWIW Kalama Methanol Refinery.

Sincerely,
Laura Bauer MSN RNC