

Lynn Regelin

Comments for committee hearing on
Kalama Manufacturing & Marine Export Facility

I have been following development of the Kalama Manufacturing & Marine Export Facility since 2018. More recently I've also been following public announcements of other methanol production facilities in other regions of the world. The proposed Kalama facility will produce 10,000 metric tonnes of methanol daily. In just the last eight months, construction of five methanol plants have been announced or begun operations in countries around the world with production totaling more than 3 times the Kalama figure.

- 5,225 mtpd from natural gas in Turkmenistan
- 5,479 mtpd from coal in Indonesia
- 6,600 mtpd from coal in China
- 7,000 mtpd natural gas in Iran
- 7,200 mtpd from coal in China
- A total of 31,704 new tonnes of methanol to be produced each day worldwide. And that's just since January.

The swell of methanol production worldwide is evidence that—contrary to wishes expressed before this committee—the world's demand for fossil-sourced methanol isn't going anywhere but up. As long as we want dashboards in our cars, cases for our computers and TVs, carpeting under our feet, upholstery on our furniture, and clothes on our backs, we unavoidably want methanol.

Many listeners are taking notes of this committee proceedings. Look at the pen in your hand. Unless you bought a very expensive one, that pen has a plastic body and a plastic ink cartridge. That pen started as methanol, as do a thousand other products we handle throughout the year. To vilify the production of methanol—to say we don't want, don't need it, or that it must somehow just go away—is naïve. As a technological society, methanol will be with us for generations.

But what we can do, and what we must do, is use our technology to ameliorate the climate damaging, greenhouse gas co-product of methanol production. The proposed Kalama facility does this like none other in the world.

The planet doesn't care where greenhouse gasses emanate. The atmosphere doesn't look to see where the carbon dioxide is released and say, "I'm going to punish you there." Climate change doesn't happen in the sky over Washington, or China or Turkmenistan. It happens everywhere. That's why it's "global warming." Greenhouse gases are evenly dispersed throughout the atmosphere everywhere. It's not the location of emission that matters, it's the cumulative amount from everywhere.

The five newly announced methanol plants will be constructed in countries with far less emissions regulations and climate protection than in the United States, perhaps none at all. Greenhouse gas emissions from these foreign-built facilities will be 6, or 10, or 12 million tonnes per year greater than from the conscientiously conceived and technologically superior Kalama facility.

Rather than seeing the Kalama Manufacturing & Marine Export Facility as a detriment, we can and should hold it up as an exemplar to the world. In an era when the United States is tragically, embarrassingly backing away from our commitment to international climate protection, America's Pacific Northwest, the State of Washington, and the City of Kalama can proudly say, look at us, look at how we're doing it. Follow our lead.

Thank you for your attention.

