

Paula Overholtzer

I'm a retired teacher, having taught 30 years in Clark County, and one year in Chongqing, China. Throughout China, the skies are gray with Industrial Air Pollution. I know all about that!

Before becoming a science enhancement teacher for Battle Ground Public Schools, I had transformed my classroom into a Rain Forest, complete with water-misters, a water-fall, tropical plants, live reptiles and birds, plenty of posters, books, and films about wild-and-scenic places.....along with discussions about Ecology. Young students recited this "Earth Day" mantra: "Because the Earth is my home and needs my help to survive, I will try my best to respect the Earth at all times by conserving energy, recycling, and buying and using those products that are least harmful to the environment." Fracked Gas does indeed qualify as extremely harmful to the environment, along with pipelines, releasing greenhouse gases, fossil fuel spills and leaks, burning methanol as fuel in China, and the endless stream of single-use plastics.

Another consideration for me is the extreme amount of both Fracked Gas and Electricity to be used by this Methanol Refinery! It seems probable that the cost of these two commodities would go sky-high for Washington residents because we'd be competing with the Refinery for them! But many seem willing to squander away a peaceful, healthy existence for Peace River's Indigenous population; to allow transport of extracted gas through certain-to-leak pipelines passing through our state; to allow enormous amounts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions to pollute our state's air (and this planet-in-crisis); and then to voluntarily pay more (due to high demand) for the Natural Gas, Water, and Electricity that we need for our own current uses. It doesn't make any sense. And it doesn't make any sense that China would give up some of its coal-powered refineries just because, "Those people in Washington decided to allow the construction of the biggest fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery in the world!"

It is heart-breaking to realize that this proposed atrocity on the Mighty Columbia River is all about jobs, port rent receipts, tax revenue, high profits for a foreign developer, and, if truth-be-told, bribes behind-the-scenes. It cannot be worth it. We, as a human species need to act now to save our planet. Subsidized fossil fuel extraction and usage is devastating this world. Now's the time to make the switch to green, renewable energy. Our state is supposed to be all about that! Cowlitz County's citizens could be put to work building light-rail or a high-speed magnetic-levitation train along the I-5 corridor from Portland to Seattle, for instance! Good jobs!

At one rally I attended along the Kalama River, during which kayakers paddled past with signs that read NO FRACKED GAS..... and, by the way, two of my former students were among those activist kayakers!..... I was the person carrying the big sign that read, "Best Governor: Jay Inslee." It had been announced that Governor Inslee had come off-the-fence and proclaimed his disapproval of the Methanol Refinery. I supported him as the "presidential candidate with a strong environmental focus!!"

I hope that we can continue to count on our Governor, who claims concern for the Climate Crisis, along with Laura Watson and her Department of Ecology Team, to lead the way by rejecting another Fossil Fuel Disaster. Neither Indigenous Peoples of Canada nor citizens of Kalama wish to

reside in "sacrifice zones."