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The SEIS shows that pollution caused by the Kalama methanol facility would be equivalent to 4.6 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution each year. That's staggering. It means that this one project would be equal to around 5 percent of the state's total climate emissions from all other activities combined. In short, it's a scheme that is wildly out of step with every Northwest climate-related statute and aspiration on the books. And it gets worse, because different assumptions (for gas transportation leakage rates, end-use for the methanol, time-frame for evaluation climate potency, and other factors) show that it is possible the facility's all-in carbon pollution could be as much as 9.4 million metric tons per year.

So where are the alleged climate benefits coming from? In a word, speculation.

The project backers are making claims teetering on the flimsy premise: that if Washington fails to supply vast quantities of gas-derived petrochemicals to China then Chinese manufacturers will do something even worse. (Namely, that China will make just as much olefin material, but do it with even-dirtier coal.) If that sounds like tortured logic, it's because it is. It is essentially saying that scientific alarms be damned: we should double-down on climate pollution over the coming decades in the hopes that someone else won't triple-down on it. That's a morally reckless approach to the climate.

Also, on the economics front the SEIS fails to consider the lower price competition that will result from the new very large Russian methanol plant being planned at the Baltic port of Vysotsk. Clearly, no permits should be issued for the proposed Kalama Methanol plant.