



November 15, 2017

John Brickey  
City of Longview  
PO Box 128  
Longview, WA 98632

*Sent via email to:* PCFscoping@mylongview.com

**Re: Scope of EIS for Longview Anhydrous Ammonia Plant**

Dear Mr. Brickley,

The undersigned organizations submit the following comments on the City of Longview's Determination of Significance for Pacific Coast Fertilizer LLC's ("PCF") proposed Longview Anhydrous Ammonia plant, pipelines, and export terminal (collectively, the "proposal"). The City's correct determination that PCF's proposal is likely to have significant adverse environmental gives the City the opportunity to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") under Washington's State Environmental Policy Act ("SEPA"). The City's EIS should thoroughly document and explain the human health risks and environmental impacts posed by PCF. The findings of the EIS will inform the City's permitting decisions, including the City's right to exercise its substantive SEPA authority. *See* LMC 17.20.220.

Columbia Riverkeeper, the Washington Chapter of the Sierra Club, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, and 350PDX (collectively, "commenters") submit the following scoping comment to help the City identify issues that must be addressed in the EIS for PCF's anhydrous ammonia plant. Commenters are non-profit organizations dedicated to protecting the environment and natural resources of the Columbia River watershed and the Pacific Northwest and ensuring that all citizens of Washington and the Pacific Northwest have safe, clean, and healthy air, water, and communities. Members of these organizations live, work, and recreate near PCF's proposed anhydrous ammonia plant and the pipelines that would service the plant. These members' lives could be materially impacted by PCF's proposal.

The City should request that the Washington Department of Ecology ("Ecology") and the Washington Department of Health ("DOH") partner with and assist the City in preparing the EIS. Ecology's experience in preparing EISs for complex industrial facilities, and DOH's

perspective on health impacts, would be valuable in the EIS process.

### **I. Legal framework for the EIS.**

In adopting SEPA, the Washington legislature declared the protection of the environment to be a core state priority. RCW 43.21C.010. SEPA acknowledges that “each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment and that each person has a responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment.” RCW 43.21C.020(3). This policy statement “indicates in the strongest possible terms the basic importance of environmental concerns to the people of the state.” *Leschi v. Highway Comm’n*, 84 Wn.2d 271, 279–80 (1974).

At SEPA’s heart is the EIS process—a requirement to fully analyze the environmental impact of a project and its alternatives. RCW 43.21C.031(1). EISs allow decisionmakers like the City to make policy decisions with full appreciation of the environmental impacts of those decisions, the available alternatives, and any mitigation that may be appropriate. To facilitate reasoned decisionmaking, an EIS must include and evaluate “reasonable alternatives” to the proposed action, including a “no-action” alternative. WAC 197-11-440(5). To fully capture a project’s impacts, EISs must examine the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the project. WAC 197-11-792(c); WAC 197-11-060(4)(d).

Importantly, SEPA’s regulations require that EISs evaluate environmental impacts even if those impacts are outside the jurisdiction of the deciding agency. WAC 197-11-060(c). PCF’s proposal has implications for our climate, by creating a new source of greenhouse gas emissions at a time when it is critical to reduce carbon output in order to avert catastrophic impacts from climate change.

### **III. Scope of PCF’s EIS.**

This scoping comment does not attempt to discuss in detail every issue that should be covered in the EIS. Instead, this comment lists—in no particular order of importance—some of the most pertinent direct and indirect impacts that the EIS should analyze. These impacts must be discussed in light of the cumulative impact of this and other fossil fuel manufacturing and export projects currently proposed and existing in the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, the analyses described below should disclose any disproportionate negative impacts of construction and operations on low income populations and communities of color. These issues and analyses include:

- Analysis of the impacts of constructing, maintaining, and operating a new lateral natural gas pipeline from the Ostrander Line to the plant on people, communities, businesses, and critical areas in and around Longview.<sup>1</sup>
- Lifecycle accounting of greenhouse gases released during the construction and operation of the anhydrous ammonia plant, during the extraction and transport of natural gas to serve as feedstock, through electricity generation to power the plant, during shipment of anhydrous ammonia from the plant to customers, and during end use of the product.<sup>2</sup>
- Analysis of the risk of, and emergency response capacity to, incidents involving releases of anhydrous ammonia stored at the project site or transported by truck or pipeline from the plant. Specifically, the EIS should explain the consequences of tank leak or failure at the project site, including why the SEPA checklist indicates that the anhydrous ammonia storage tanks will be refrigerated and the consequences of losing refrigeration.
- Analysis of the risk of, and local emergency response capacity to, incidents involving natural gas transported by pipeline to, or used at, the plant.
- Analysis of the adequacy of existing local, state, and federal safety regulations applicable to PCF to prevent accidents and spills.
- Analysis of the risk of a tanker ship accident and anhydrous ammonia release in the Columbia River, or along Washington, Oregon, or California's coasts, and the probable human, environmental, and economic impacts of such an accident.

<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the City should explain why the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has jurisdiction over the proposed intra-state lateral pipeline segment (as stated on page 3 of the SEPA Checklist) rather than the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

<sup>2</sup> The Washington Shorelines Hearings Board ("SHB") recently explained that this type of GHG life-cycle analysis is an important part of an EIS for a large-scale industrial gas customer like PCF. In an order invalidating the EIS prepared for Northwest Innovation Works' proposed Kalama methanol refinery and export terminal, the SHB stated that the "EIS's greenhouse gas estimate omits several offsite emission sources associated with the Project, such as greenhouse gas emissions from production and transportation of natural gas, offsite production of electricity, and some vessel transportation. The evidence presented demonstrated that some or all of those emissions can be estimated and included in the impact analysis. \* \* \* Lacking such analysis renders the Final EIS inadequate as it fails to present decisionmakers with a reasonably thorough discussion of the significant aspects of the probable environmental consequences of the agency's decision." *See Columbia Riverkeeper et al. v. Cowlitz County et al.*, SHB NO. 17-010c, *Order on Motions for Partial Summary Judgment*, p. 18, n. 3 (September 15, 2017) (internal citations omitted).

- Analysis of impacts to air quality, and the consequent effects on human health, from air pollution released during plant construction and operations, including vehicle and vessel traffic associated with the proposal. Specifically, the EIS should compare the ambient air quality in the project area that would exist during project construction and operation to established regulatory and health thresholds such as Washington’s Acceptable Source Impact Levels, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and the World Health Organization’s human health criteria.
- Analysis of the visual and other impacts of the 200-foot-tall flare stack and flare on nearby residences (some less than 1,300 feet from the base of the stack) and communities, including information about the frequency and duration of flaring.
- Analysis of whether cumulative gas demand from this and other proposed industrial gas customers in western Washington (including, but not limited to, Northwest Innovation Works’ Kalama and Port Westward methanol refineries and Puget Sound Energy’s Tacoma LNG plant) would result in expansions of the regional gas supply pipeline infrastructure.
- Analysis of impacts on socioeconomic resources including employment, tax revenue, property values, health outcomes, and economic conditions.
- Analysis of threats to groundwater resulting from spills or leaks of anhydrous ammonia or other chemicals associated with plant operation. Specifically, this analysis should include an assessment of potential threats to Longview’s drinking water wells in the Mint Farm area.
- Analysis of geological stability and liquefaction potential of PCF’s proposed anhydrous ammonia plant, pipeline segments, and terminal as a result of a moderate to large earthquake and the risks posed to humans and the environment in the event that an earthquake damages any of these structures.
- Analysis of the cumulative impacts of increased shipping traffic in the Columbia River, including wake stranding of juvenile salmon, bank erosion, transport of invasive species, conflicts with other river users, and increased dredging.
- Analysis of threats to all imperiled species, specifically including federally Threatened and Endangered fish populations in the Columbia River.
- Description of how much construction, process, cooling, domestic, and fire water that PCF would consume, including the sources (*i.e.* the particular water rights and

sources such as individual wells or waterways) of that water and the impacts of withdrawing that water from those sources.

- Analysis of the environmental impacts, in addition to GHG emissions, of extracting natural gas to provide feedstock for the anhydrous ammonia plant.

### **Conclusion**

The EIS must examine the full direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of PCF's proposal. These include the upstream impacts associated with extracting and transporting natural gas and the downstream impacts of shipping the finished product, along with the cumulative impacts of similar fossil fuel projects.

Thank you for your consideration of these scoping comments. As we know you are aware, there is a high level of public interest in this process; PCF's anhydrous ammonia plant and the associated pipelines have the potential to jeopardize public health and safety, air and water quality, wetlands habitat, climate stability, and cultural resources.

Sincerely,



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Submitted on behalf of:

**Columbia Riverkeeper**  
**The Washington Chapter of the Sierra Club**  
**Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility**  
**350PDX**