

## **Global Partners: Oil Trains on the Columbia River**

Oil trains pose unacceptable health and safety risks for Columbia County and other rail communities such as Portland, Vancouver, and towns in the Columbia River Gorge.

We need your help to send Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) the message that Oregonians want the agency to reject any plans to expand oil train traffic through our towns and along the Columbia River. Through July 31, Oregon DEQ will accept public comments on an air permit renewal application from Global Partners (also known as the Columbia Pacific Bio-Refinery) for its operation at Port Westward. DEQ says the application is specific to ethanol production, but it appears Global intends to expand its tank storage capabilities for oil, as well.



### **Hold the Date: DEQ Public Hearing About Global Partners**

Oregon DEQ will hold a public hearing about the air permit renewal for a portion of Global's ethanol operation on **Wednesday, July 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Clatskanie Cultural Center, located at 75 S. Nehalem Street, Clatskanie, OR.** Please plan to join us at this meeting and urge DEQ to deny Global's application or prohibit the facility from handling crude oil. You can read DEQ's [public notice here](#).

### **Background on Global Partners**

- In 2012, Global Partners bought the bankrupt Columbia Pacific Bio-Refinery, an ethanol production plant located at Port Westward.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2012 and 2013, instead of starting up ethanol production, Global Partners began to ship large volumes of crude oil via rail to the ethanol plant for export. With little public input or knowledge, Global switched from corn trains to oil trains. [DEQ fined Global in 2014](#) for shipping more oil than its permits allowed. Unfortunately, in 2014, DEQ also issued new permits to allow Global to ship up to 120,000 barrels per day of oil.
- Global's ethanol facility hasn't produced ethanol since 2009, and Global has not shipped crude oil since 2015. In recent years, Global has transloaded ethanol, moving it from trains to storage tanks to ships.
- In December 2018, the Port of Columbia County approved a change to Global's lease allowing the oil company to move heavy oil in addition to ethanol and lighter crude. The Port's vote opened the door to tar sands shipments through Columbia County. Hundreds of people weighed in against the proposal in 2018.
- At the same time Global Partners was urging the Port to expand its range of oil shipments, Global Partners asked DEQ to grant an air permit renewal for its ethanol

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<sup>1</sup> Global Partners also goes by the names "Columbia Pacific Bio-Refinery" and "Cascade Kelly Holdings."

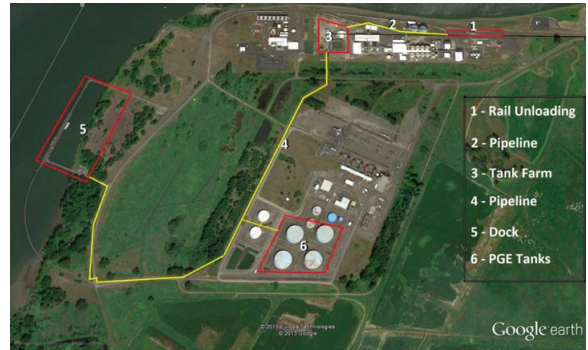
production facility. As discussed below, DEQ is now seeking public comments on this air permit renewal, and we are concerned about its potential to facilitate oil-by-rail.

- In June 2019, Global Partners also asked DEQ to renew Global’s air permits for its oil transloading operation.

### **Is Global Asking For Air Pollution Permits for Ethanol, Crude Oil, or Both?**

Both. Global has asked for two permit renewals.

- The first, open for comment until July 31, pertains to air pollution coming from the production of ethanol.
- The second, which is not yet open for comment, would permit air pollution during the transloading of oil and ethanol.
- Unfortunately, the permit renewals contain overlapping components. This is both confusing and concerning.
- Global’s overlapping permit applications for ethanol production and oil train shipments raise the concern that Global could obtain permits to build, buy, and operate additional tanks for one purpose (ethanol) while planning to use them for another (crude oil).
- Global proposes to either build new tanks or buy old tanks from PGE, and some of these tanks are proposed for use to store both ethanol and crude.
- Specifically, Global plans to use these tanks for both crude oil and ethanol: 6104, 6105 & 6106, 6201, 6202, 6203, and 6205. These tanks appear in both Global’s oil transloading and ethanol production permits. Together, these tanks represent over 30 million gallons of potential crude oil storage, enough to hold ten unit trains worth of oil at a time.



### **Oil Trains Are Dangerous**

- On June 3, 2016, an oil train derailed in Mosier, Oregon traveling 26 miles per hour: 16 cars derailed and four of the 96 cars ruptured and released oil. The cars involved were CPC-1232 cars, considered “newer” and “safer” than DOT-111 cars.
- Oil spilled into the Columbia River. And the ensuing fire burned for 14 hours, closing I-84, prompting school and home evacuations, and damaging Mosier’s water system. The Mosier incident involved Bakken crude oil, a volatile form of crude, but other types of oil trains also pose serious dangers. Trains carrying heavy tar sands oil, including diluted bitumen from Alberta, Canada, can also burn during derailments. Just as troubling, the oil that spills from these derailments can sink in water, making the toxic, thick oil very difficult to contain or clean up.



*Oil train derailed carrying Bakken crude oil in Mosier, Oregon*



*Oil train derailed carrying tar sands crude near Gogama, Ontario, Canada*

- Each oil train carries roughly three million gallons of oil. If Global Partners adds tank storage and rail unloading capability, Columbia County communities could see up to two trains per day delivering crude oil to Global Partners.

**What are the Implications for Columbia County if DEQ Approves Global Partners?**

According to DEQ, Global Partners’ ethanol production will release significant air pollution into the environment. And according to Global Partners’ June 2019 application to transload oil, there could be significant additional pollution from oil train unloading as well. DEQ has not evaluated the permits together, and Global has not been required to obtain a major pollution permit even though its combined operations have the potential to be a major source of air pollution. Further, DEQ’s permit only assesses the air pollution coming from the facility, not pollution or risks related to the oil trains that deliver oil to the site.

<b><u>Pollutant</u></b>	<b><u>Ethanol Permit (open for comment now)</u></b>	<b><u>Oil Transloading Permit (submitted in June 2019, not open for comment yet)</u></b>	<b><u>Total permitted Pollution if both air permits granted</u></b>
Particulate Matter (PM)	99 (tons/year)	9 (tons/year)	108 tons/year
Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> )	39	39	78 tons/year
Nitrogen Oxides (NOx)	99	39	138 tons/year
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	99	99	198 tons/year
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)	90	78	168 tons/year
Greenhouse Gases	665,800	74,000	739,000 tons/year
Hazardous Air Pollutants	14.9	3.8	18.7 tons/year

Taken together, Global’s air permit applications have the potential to create significant air pollution at Port Westward and in the Lower Columbia region. Global’s operations will contribute to the formation of low-level ozone (smog), and other toxic and fine particulate air pollution that can harm human health.

Just as importantly, DEQ has a critical opportunity to evaluate and restrict the Global Partners facility and to prevent the next oil train derailment from happening in Scappoose, St. Helens, Columbia City, Rainier, Prescott, Portland, Vancouver, or communities in the Columbia River Gorge.

## What Can We Do?

### **1. Attend the DEQ hearing on Wednesday, July 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Clatskanie Cultural Center, located at 75 S. Nehalem Street, Clatskanie, OR.**

#### **At the hearing, tell DEQ:**

- Global's permit is confusing. DEQ should clearly separate equipment used for ethanol from equipment used for oil. The ethanol production permit should not allow the company to build, buy, or operate tanks that will handle oil. DEQ should consider withdrawing the draft permit, amending the permit to remove the overlap between oil and ethanol operations, and re-circulating a new draft for public comment.
- As currently drafted, DEQ should deny Global's air permit renewal application because Global clearly intends to use some of the permitted facilities to store and ship crude oil. Multiple tanks—totaling over 30 million gallons of storage—are proposed for use for oil as well as ethanol.
- The permit does not evaluate the potential air pollution impacts of ethanol tanks being used for oil. Heavy crude oil can contain significant quantities of toxic air pollution such as hydrogen sulfide and volatile organic compounds such as benzene that are not evaluated in the permit for ethanol production.
- If DEQ proceeds with the permit, DEQ should replace part 2.8 of the ethanol permit with clear language **prohibiting the permittee from using tanks or other equipment authorized under the ethanol production permit for unloading, storing, handling, or transloading crude oil.** DEQ's current condition is inadequate. It says the "permittee is prohibited from performing the transloading of crude oil," but DEQ offers a definition of transloading that does not include storage of oil.
- DEQ should also deny Global's air permit renewal application for transloading oil because Global's proposed activities have significantly changed, and Global is now planning to transload heavy tar sands crude rather than ethanol.
- DEQ should consider the cumulative impacts of both of Global Partners' permit renewal applications. They cannot be meaningfully evaluated individually. The public deserves a clear picture of how Global's facility will operate and its potential to produce significant air pollution.
- DEQ should not allow Global to establish an oil-by-rail terminal under the guise of an ethanol facility, nor should it allow Global to threaten the health, safety, and water quality of Columbia County residents by increasing oil train traffic.

**2. Can't make it to the hearing? Send DEQ a comment.** Email your comment to [NWRAQPermits@deq.state.or.us](mailto:NWRAQPermits@deq.state.or.us). Send written comments by mail to: Northwest Region AQ Permit Coordinator 700 NE Multnomah St. Ste 600, Portland, OR 97232. Comments are due by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 31, 2019.

**3. Talk to your neighbors.** Let them know how critical it is for DEQ and the Port of Columbia County to stop Global from sending oil trains through Columbia County and other communities.

**More information:** Contact: Kate Murphy, Community Organizer, Columbia Riverkeeper.  
[Kate@ColumbiaRiverkeeper.org](mailto:Kate@ColumbiaRiverkeeper.org)