

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Tori Heroux, Neighbors for Clean Air, 803.250.9604, tori@whatsinourair.org
Dan Serres, Columbia Riverkeeper, 503.890.2441, dan@columbiariverkeeper.org

On Four-Year Anniversary of Mosier Oil Train Derailment, Over 1,200 Call on Oregon DEQ to Deny Air Pollution Permit for Oil Train Terminal

[PORTLAND, OR] — Just after the four-year anniversary of the dramatic June 2016 Mosier oil train derailment, spill, and fire, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received an outpouring of concern regarding a proposed permit renewal that would allow up to two full-length oil trains per day to travel through Portland, Vancouver, and Columbia County towns. Over 1,200 people urged Oregon DEQ to deny or significantly amend an air pollution permit that would allow oil company Global Partners to potentially bring 120,000 barrels of oil per day to its Columbia Pacific Bio-Refinery facility near Clatskanie, Oregon.

A coalition of organizations also filed [detailed technical comments](#)—developed with the assistance of an industry expert—that highlighted the importance of ratcheting back potential pollution from oil train traffic.

"Global Partners has a history of underestimating potential emissions from its U.S. facilities to avoid more stringent regulation," said **Jonah Sandford, Staff Attorney for the Northwest Environmental Defense Center**. "Unfortunately the company has done so again, and has failed to provide an accurate account of the many air pollution sources at the site. It is essential that DEQ put this permitting process on hold until Oregonians receive a complete and accurate assessment of the local air pollution hazards from Global's transloading activities."

"There's absolutely no precedent for a U.S. environmental agency issuing multiple permits for the same equipment," said **Tori Heroux, Program Director at Neighbors for Clean Air**. "There is no way for the agency or the public to confirm whether ethanol, biodiesel or crude oil is being stored, or to enforce the permit limits. Allowing this novel application of separate permits will create an opportunity for other fossil fuel terminals to request similar treatment, abusing operational flexibility to substantially change their operations without public process or analysis."

"DEQ must seriously consider the benefits of prevention and the precautionary principle as well as environmental justice in its deliberations about this air quality permit," said **epidemiologist Theodora Tsongas, PhD, MS of Oregon PSR (Physicians for Social Responsibility)**. "The upstream impacts of Global Partners' proposed operations would adversely affect the already seriously compromised regional airshed that includes the Portland metropolitan area and would have disproportionate impacts on already stressed communities." [Oregon PSR's full comments can be found here](#).

“Oil trains pose a risk to our climate and to our safety,” said **Emilia Ponti, founder of Mothers for a Safe Columbia County**. “Not only would potential oil trains pose a risk to homes, schools, and businesses, but they represent a huge amount of potential global warming pollution.”

Comments and concerns about the Global Partners potential oil train traffic and air pollution permit came from both sides of the Columbia River.

“On June 2, of 2014, the Vancouver City Council passed a resolution opposing any project that would increase oil train traffic through Clark County, and urged other jurisdictions to avoid permitting those kinds of projects,” said **Don Steinke, a climate activist in SW Washington**. “Furthermore, the City commissioned a risk assessment, which concluded the risk to Vancouver would be \$6 billion in the event of a worst case scenario oil train accident. The trains headed to Global pass through many populated areas in addition to Vancouver. This is unacceptable.”

Many commenters question the need for the permit to allow crude oil at all, as Global Partners has indicated it plans to shift to renewable diesel rather than oil. The company’s website also says the facility switched from oil to ethanol in 2015.

“It’s not clear to us why DEQ insists on holding the door open for oil trains coming through Portland in this draft air pollution permit, or why the agency continues to treat this facility as a minor source” said **Erin Saylor, Staff Attorney for Columbia Riverkeeper**. “It is clear to us that the emissions calculations submitted by the company are deeply flawed. If Global wants to keep crude oil in its permit - at the volumes proposed - it should be operating under a much more robust air permit.”

DEQ is expected to take several months to review the numerous and detailed comments raising concerns about air pollution at the Global Partners facility near Clatskanie.

##



Mosier, OR. June 3, 2016. Union Pacific Oil Train Derailment.



Port Westward, OR. Site of Global Partners' potential oil train terminal near Clatskanie, OR.

Resources:

[Coalition Technical Comments to DEQ on Global ACDP](#)