

September 2, 2020

For Immediate Release

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Washington Analysis Reveals Pollution Potential of Major Methanol Refinery

[Lacey, WA] -- Today, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) released a [new draft environmental analysis](#) to evaluate the greenhouse gas impacts of the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery, proposed in Kalama, Washington. The methanol refinery would use up to 320 million cubic feet of fracked gas per day, more than all of Washington's gas-fired power plants combined. Altogether, Ecology concluded the methanol refinery would cause 4.6 million tons of climate pollution every year for 40 years—making it one of Washington's largest sources of climate pollution.

Washington's new analysis sided with environmental and public health groups on two key issues. First, Ecology determined that the Kalama refinery would cause more methanol to be burned as fuel in China. Second, Ecology found that project backers previously low-balled the amount of upstream methane pollution the proposal would cause.

"For years, backers of the Kalama methanol project tried to hide the tremendous amount of greenhouse gas pollution that this refinery would cause. By driving increased fracking and pushing consumption of fracked fossil fuels, this refinery would dramatically undermine Washington's climate and clean energy goals," said **Sally Keely, a math professor and resident of Kalama.**

"I'm a frequent fisherman on the Columbia River, and Kalama is my home," said **John Flynn, a resident of Kalama.** "The impacts of climate change, ocean warming, and acidification have had a significant negative impact on these fish. I believe that if the methanol refinery were built it would only add to and compound these climate impacts, further negatively impacting these salmon and steelhead. In all honesty, I cannot see myself sitting in my boat in the shadow of the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery."

"Northwest Innovation Works can't hide from the massive climate impact of their dirty proposed fracked gas-to-methanol facility," said **Sept Gernez, Organizer with the Sierra Club Washington State Chapter.** "This project would be disastrous for our communities and our climate, and it's time to reject it once and for all."

Unfortunately, Ecology's draft analysis still includes the speculative and unenforceable theory that methanol made in Kalama could replace methanol made elsewhere with higher carbon emissions.

"The urgency of our climate crisis demands the highest level of scrutiny, and we cannot allow massive new fracked gas projects to move forward based on speculation and the faint hope of theoretical emission reductions," said **Alyssa Macy, CEO of Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters**. "This analysis confirms what we have already known—that this dangerous project poses potentially catastrophic climate impacts and has no place in Washington's clean energy future."

"This massive fossil fuel project poses catastrophic threats to our climate and imperiled wildlife," said **Jared Margolis, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity**. "This proposal to ship methanol to Asia is unconscionable given the ongoing climate crisis and the potential for irreparable harm to the Columbia River ecosystem. We'll continue working to ensure this destructive project never moves forward."

Ecology is planning to hold virtual hearings on the project on September 17 and September 22. Ecology will accept written comments on the draft analysis until October 2.

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