

Speak Up For Farms and the Columbia River at Port Westward!

The Port of Columbia County's saga to transform over 800 acres of farmland and Columbia River shoreline and forestland into an industrial shipping hub for fossil fuels and other industries continues. This summer, the port produced a report painting a rosy picture of how a massive industrial district is compatible with nearby farms and homes. Port Westward is home to blueberry farms, mint farms, cattle operations, and salmon habitat. The Port of Columbia County claims that heavy industry will have no impact on their neighbors.



The port's report on the compatibility of industrial projects and neighboring farms and salmon habitat makes inaccurate conclusions. Based on flawed analysis, the port proposes to move forward with a plan to convert 837 acres of farmland to industrial uses, such as oil train terminals, refineries, LNG facilities, and power plants. We need your voice to stop them.

Columbia County Commissioners can decide to deny the rezone request from the port. Public comment period on this issue is November 17 - December 7, and it's important to review the report today and develop your testimony. We will only have a few weeks to submit comments.

Here is a list of some glaring omissions and misconceptions in the report:

- The compatibility report arbitrarily limits the study area to just 2000 feet from the proposed rezone—the distance of six average city blocks. By limiting the study area, the port is refusing to acknowledge the risk to dozens of residential homes located just beyond the 2000-foot study area.
- The report refuses to acknowledge that agriculture is not monolithic. The only agricultural commodity recognized in the report is the hybrid poplar tree farm. Berries, mint, livestock, and all other commodities are not considered, despite the fact that these activities are currently occurring within the proposed rezoned area and nearby. The report also fails to consider the sale of the tree farm and the future agricultural uses that will depend on their ability to utilize the prime soils in this area.
- The report denies reality with its claim that adding 837 acres of industrial development would simply maintain the same level of risk and impact to homes and agriculture as the existing Port Westward site. In reality, nearly doubling an industrial site increases traffic, pollution, water use, and the risks of an accidental spill or explosion.

- The report bizarrely states that your home and farm carry a similar level of impact as an industrial facility. True, farms sometimes use chemicals and homes often have septic systems, but these impacts pale in comparison to what exists in an 800-acre industrial park with an oil train terminal, a methanol refinery, or both.
- The report dramatically understates the potential risks of industrial water pollution. The report does not adequately address how stormwater, process water, or potential spills of oil and other pollutants could impact irrigation and other water resources.
- The report claims that if a spill from the industrial facility occurred, the Beaver Drainage District pumps that currently keep the land at Port Westward above water could simply be turned off. While this might keep the pollution from entering the Columbia River, it could also flood nearby farms and homes with the spilled material.
- The report gives almost no attention to potential impacts to water quality or habitat issues outside the Beaver Drainage District dike. The report fails to show how industrializing this area will meet local land use standards for protecting salmon, migratory birds, or Columbia white-tailed deer, instead arguing that other agencies will resolve these issues later.

The Port of Columbia County's report is a flawed attempt to convince homeowners and farmers that living and working next to a massive industrial hub will be OK. The port gets a failing grade on their report but unfortunately, we are not the decision-makers. Columbia County Commissioners need to hold the port accountable for their terrible report and deny the Port Westward rezoning.

Here is the County's review timeline:

- Staff Report release - November 10
- Initial comment period begins - November 17 – December 7
- Rebuttal Comments due - December 28
- Final arguments from Port of Columbia County due January 11
- To date, the County has not announced a public hearing.

Beginning on November 17, Submit Comments To:

- **Email comments to:** jacyn.normine@columbiacountyor.gov
- **Mail comments to:** Board of Columbia County Commissioners' Office
Room 338
230 Strand Street
St Helens, Oregon 97051

Stay tuned! We will post more information at columbiariverkeeper.org on how you can submit testimony and take action on this important issue in the coming days and weeks.

Contact: Dan Serres, Conservation Director, Columbia Riverkeeper (503) 890-2441
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