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FINAL STUDY OF KALAMA METHANOL REFINERY FINDS: Fracked Gas Refinery and Export Terminal Would Have Significant Climate Impact

December 21, 2020 (Kalama, WA)—The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) released its final study on the massive fracked gas-to-methanol refinery proposed in Kalama, WA. Ecology determined that the fossil fuel processing facility would have a significant negative impact on our climate.

Ecology found that the project would:

- increase greenhouse gas emissions within Washington state by almost one million metric tons of carbon dioxide a year;
- increase methanol supply in China, causing more methanol to be burned as fuel;
- produce higher worldwide emissions than previously estimated, based on better information about extracting, processing, and transporting the natural gas used to make the methanol.

“In thousands of written comments, and in over 11 hours of public testimony, people in Kalama and across the Northwest urged Ecology to protect our climate and our community from this destructive, polluting refinery proposal—and Ecology is listening,” said **Sally Keely, a math professor and a resident of Kalama.**

“This final study shows what most Washintonians already knew: in the middle of a climate emergency, building the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery is the last thing we need,” said **Stephanie Hillman, Northwest Campaign Representative for Sierra Club and Co-Director of the Power Past Fracked Gas Coalition.**

“Ecology’s study shows that Washington simply cannot build a clean energy future by investing in dirty energy,” said **Alyssa Macy, CEO of Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters.** “If Washington locks Kalama into forty years of fossil fuel-driven methanol production and pollution, we will have failed to address the current climate crisis and harmed the health of our planet today and for generations to come.”

“This project would cause a level of pollution that is stunningly out of step with Washington’s goals for reducing greenhouse gases,” said **Dan Serres, Conservation Director with**

Columbia Riverkeeper. “Governor Inslee and Ecology must reject this proposal and protect Washington’s future, and this study shows why.”

The study’s findings set the stage for Washington to reject the refinery proposal based on the Shoreline Management Act and the state’s ownership of land in the Kalama Lateral pipeline route. Washington will likely make decisions on these permits in coming months.

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Resources:

- [Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Northwest Innovation Works’ proposed Kalama methanol facility \(SSEIS\)](#)
- [Columbia Riverkeeper et al.’s comments on Ecology’s draft climate study](#)
- [Department of Ecology News Release - Dec. 21, 2020](#)

Background

Northwest Innovation Works seeks to build methanol refineries at Kalama, Washington, and Port Westward, Oregon, to take advantage of the region’s cheap fracked gas (methane), electricity, and water. The refineries would convert stunning volumes of fracked gas into methanol for export to China, to make plastics or fuel China’s growing fleet of automobiles. Each methanol refinery could consume 270 million cubic feet of fracked gas per day, more than all other industries in Washington combined. Methane, collected by fracking, is a potent greenhouse gas. New studies show that fracking for methane gas is a major threat to our climate because methane escapes into the atmosphere from gas wells and pipelines.

[Washington Environmental Council](#) is a nonprofit, statewide advocacy organization that has been driving positive change to solve Washington’s most critical environmental challenges since 1967 with the mission to protect, restore, and sustain Washington’s environment for all.

[Columbia Riverkeeper](#) works to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean.

[The Sierra Club](#) is the nation’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.