



October 5, 2026

Office of Governor Tina Kotek
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301

Office of Secretary of State Tobias Read
900 Court Street NE
Capitol Room 136
Salem OR 97301

Send via email to: amy.schlusser@oregon.gov, oregon.sos@sos.oregon.gov

RE: NEXT Renewable Fuels' business practices

Dear Governor Kotek and Secretary Read,

Significant new information has emerged regarding the business practices and activities of the entity generally known as NEXT Renewable Fuels or NXTClean Fuels (hereinafter, collectively, "NEXT") and their principals, including Chris Efird. As substantiated in the enclosed document, NEXT has failed to pay significant corporate taxes, property taxes, and significant debts owed to creditors, including Oregon landowners. Accordingly, and for the reasons explained more fully below, Columbia Riverkeeper and the Northwest Environmental Defense Center respectfully request that:

- Governor Kotek withdraw her [formal letter of support for NEXT](#), and
- Secretary Read revoke NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc.'s authority to do business in Oregon, and investigate the status of NEXT's other corporate entities.

Oregon's leaders and regulators should begin protecting the public and our state's natural resources from NEXT's disreputable business practices.

NEXT appears to have lost, or be in the process of losing, its corporate status. Two Delaware business entities are typically associated with [NEXT's proposal to develop a non-conventional diesel refinery](#) near Clatskanie, Oregon: "NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc." and "NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC." As a result of their failure to pay nearly half a million dollars in taxes, Delaware lists the status of these two NEXT entities as "void" and "cease good standing," respectively. Failure to pay franchise taxes means that, under Delaware law, "the

charter of the corporation shall be void, and all powers conferred by law upon the corporation are declared inoperative” 8 Del. Code § 510. **In other words, NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. appears to no longer be a legally recognized corporation under Delaware law, and NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC may soon follow suit.** Nevertheless, both NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. and NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC continue to be listed as registered in Oregon, and the principals of these corporate entities continue to do business in Oregon in these corporations’ names.

NEXT also appears to be unable, or unwilling, to pay past-due debts totaling several million dollars related to the refinery project. To the best of our knowledge, NEXT agreed to purchase roughly 25 acres of land at Port Westward in 2020 to serve as part of the proposed refinery site; NEXT has failed to make roughly \$3.6 million in overdue payments, and the , property is now set to be sold at public auction. NEXT also borrowed hundreds of thousands of dollars from several investors, nominally to pay off the above-mentioned land purchase; those debts have come due but allegedly have not been repaid, leading some creditors to sue NEXT in a Houston court. NEXT also contracted for over half a million dollars of work to develop the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the refinery project; NEXT has not paid that contractor and is being sued for breach of contract in a Columbia County court. All of these creditors also have liens against the 25 acres owned by NEXT at Port Westward. It is unclear whether NEXT has any substantial assets beyond the land at issue.

Governor Kotek should revoke her [letter of support for NEXT](#), sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on January 27, 2026, regarding NEXT’s application to permanently destroy over 100 acres of Oregon’s wetlands and waterways. Based on the new information about NEXT’s business practices, many of the project’s benefits cited in Governor Kotek’s letter of support seem very unlikely or uncertain to occur. For instance, the Governor’s letter anticipated that NEXT would “generate over 3,000 union construction jobs and 240 permanent positions” and “contribute more than \$45 million annually in tax revenue to the State of Oregon and Columbia County, and over \$5.5 million in fees to the Port of Columbia County.” Given NEXT’s apparent unwillingness to pay corporate taxes, local property taxes, and Port fees—and NEXT’s inability or refusal to pay contractors and creditors—the “meaningful impacts” for the local economy foreseen by the letter of support are unlikely to materialize. Similar [failures to pay taxes and creditors](#) occurred at a biofuel facility in Odessa, Washington, that was backed by some of NEXT’s current and former principals, [including Chris Efird](#). NEXT and its backers have repeatedly shown that they cannot be relied on to pay their taxes or debts, and Governor Kotek should therefore withdraw her support for this project.

Revoking the letter of support would send a clear message to Oregon communities that Governor Kotek is serious about protecting them from unscrupulous businesses and developers. Revoking the letter is also relevant to NEXT’s pending Clean Water Act § 404 permit

application; a letter of support from a governor is likely to influence the Army Corps' decision about whether to grant the permit. Accordingly, we request that Governor Kotek immediately contact the Army Corps and formally withdraw her letter of support for NEXT's project.

Secretary Read should begin the process of revoking NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc.'s authority to do business in Oregon. As of March 1, 2024, NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. appears to have had its corporate status voided in Delaware for failure to pay multiple years of franchise taxes. Nevertheless, in the past year alone NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. appears to have signed contracts, filed reports with the Oregon Secretary of State, and offered securities such as promissory notes and warrants to purchase common stock. The Secretary of State should commence proceedings to revoke NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc.'s authority to do business in Oregon under ORS 60.737(6) on the ground that NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. appears to have filed multiple annual reports containing material falsehoods—namely, that NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. still existed in a legal sense. Secretary Read should also request an authenticated certificate of NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc.'s corporate status from the Delaware Division of Corporations as envisioned in ORS 60.737(7) which will likely provide additional grounds for revoking this company's authority to transact business in Oregon. If NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. no longer legally exists, Secretary Read should not allow it to continue operating in Oregon.

Furthermore, Secretary Read should investigate the status and governance of NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC, also a Delaware corporate entity registered to do business in Oregon. NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC had "ceased good standing" in Delaware as of June 1, 2025, for failing to timely pay annual taxes. This LLC appears to have been owned by NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc., and/or NEXT Renewable Fuels, Inc. may have been the sole member or manager of NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC. Delaware law provides for instances where a corporate member of an LLC is dissolved or terminated (*see* 6 Del. Code § 18-705), but it is currently unclear what entity or person is legally responsible for the management of NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC. Given that Chris Efir and potentially other individuals are continuing to conduct business in Oregon under the auspices of NEXT, Secretary Read should investigate whether NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC should be permitted to do business in Oregon and—at a minimum—require NEXT Renewable Fuels Oregon, LLC to update its corporate filings to reflect its actual, current management and ownership.

The issues outlined above do not reflect minor administrative errors or clerical mistakes; rather, they reflect a pattern of business practices that make NEXT and its principals unsuitable for Oregon's communities and environment. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If you have questions or would like further information, please contact me directly at miles@columbiariverkeeper.org or (971) 515-7996.

Sincerely,



x

Miles Johnson
Legal Director
Columbia Riverkeeper

s/ Jonah Sandford

Jonah Sandford
Executive Director
Northwest Environmental Defense Center

enclosure

cc'd via email:

- Attorney General Dan Rayfield