

Letter to the Editor

Northwest Innovation Works, a new company who has never before built a methanol plant, wants to build the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery and export terminal on the Columbia River in the small town of Kalama, 30 miles north of Clark College. This massive fracked gas guzzler would increase Washington's hydraulically fractured gas usage by 38% and obligate us to decades of fossil fuel use and new pipeline infrastructure at a time when Governor Inslee is vowing to reduce our state's carbon footprint and #ActOnClimate.

Fracked "natural" gas is mostly methane, a super-potent greenhouse gas, initially far more damaging to our climate than carbon dioxide because of how effectively it absorbs heat. Methane traps 86 times as much heat as CO₂ over a 20-year period (IPCC). Methane is not a "bridge fuel"! To combat global warming we must immediately reduce both CO₂ and CH₄ emissions.

Kalama's methanol refinery would use more fracked gas than all other industries in Washington combined. That's just based on the greenhouse gas emissions stated in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before a statewide hearings board found it negligent by failing to include any upstream/downstream methane emissions. The board ruled two key permits invalid in September, but Cowlitz County and the Port of Kalama are currently appealing that decision.

As someone who loves the Columbia River, I've been fighting this proposal for two years now. This single plant would use 5 million gallons a day of fresh water, store 72 million gallons of methanol in tanks

on soil with moderate to high risk of liquefying in an earthquake, risk spills of methanol in the Columbia estuary, all to make more plastics in China and further clog our oceans putting marine life in jeopardy.

NWIW had proposed a similar plant in Tacoma, but they walked away under citizen pressure. This is an important moment in the Kalama methanol refinery proposal because the entire Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be rewritten. A public scoping comment period is open right now. Scoping is your opportunity to comment on anything that concerns you about the project and that you would like to see studied for the new EIS. Please take a minute to send an online comment at bit.ly/FightFrackedGas or visit NoMethanol360.com for more information.

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Photo Provided by Clark College



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