



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEXT Renewables Fuels Receives Milestone Local Approvals

Columbia County Commissioners Approve Land Use Permits in Unanimous Vote

St. Helens, OR – The Columbia County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve local land use permits for NEXT Renewable Fuels' \$2 billion clean fuels project. The approvals allow NEXT to build a renewable diesel facility that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7 million tons each year and significantly reduce toxic emissions from vehicles that disproportionately impact high density urban environments.

"We are ecstatic that the Board of Commissioners approved our permits," said Chris Efird, Chairman and CEO of NEXT. "With these key local permits, we move another step closer to construction. We are grateful for the outpouring of supportive comments from local community leaders and environmental experts."

Among those comments was a statement from Susan Barnes, Regional Wildlife Conservation Biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. "The department believes this proposed renewable energy project is sited appropriately, and it is consistent with the department's climate goals."

The NEXT renewable diesel facility would be a cornerstone investment in making Oregon's clean fuel goals a reality. Renewable diesel is 60-80 percent cleaner than traditional petroleum diesel and because it is chemically identical to petroleum diesel, it can be used in current diesel fleets without any vehicle modifications. Renewable diesel is made by converting recycled organic material, like cooking oil, into fuel and it costs the same at the pump.

"The NEXT project will meet a rapidly growing demand for clean, renewable fuels in the United States, and the City of Clatskanie will benefit greatly from locating near our community," said Greg Hinkelman, Clatskanie City Manager. "Our residents will find new work. Our taxing districts will get a new source of sustainable funding. Our local environment will thrive."

Estimates show the NEXT facility would generate more than \$16 million in annual tax revenue to Columbia County. Tax revenues could be used for public safety, libraries, veterans programs or other county services. The facility will create more than 3,500 green jobs during construction and more than 240 permanent green jobs during operation. An independent study anticipates that the majority of work will be filled by Oregonians, and Efird emphasized a corporate focus on hiring locally first.

Cathy Hurowitz, a long-time Columbia County resident and Superintendent of the Clatskanie School District, asserted that "NEXT has committed to restoring more than 450 acres of wetlands. Not only will Columbia County get a clean fuels facility and green jobs, but we will also get a thriving wetland that enhances our local ecosystem."

The Clatskanie School District is coordinating with NEXT to create an environmental science curriculum for local students. The program would be tied to wetland restoration and provide students with both in-classroom and hands-on learning opportunities.

NEXT continues advancing through state and federal public permitting processes. NEXT thanks the County for its work during this thorough land use process and is proud to be one step closer to taking on the climate crisis and improving Columbia County.

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