



Tacoma Central Neighborhood Council

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April 9th, 2016

RE: NWIW proposed methanol refinery

Dear Tacoma City Council, Mayor of Tacoma, Tacoma Port Commissioners,

Based on current information we are conveying our collective concerns regarding the largest methanol refinery in the world proposed for the Port of Tacoma.

- The proposed facility would use tremendous quantities of fresh water, electricity and fracked natural gas.
- The sudden increase in demand would result in utility rate increases for residents.
- The facility would produce waste water and air pollution.
- The old Kaiser site proposed for the refinery had been cleaned by the Port at a cost of tens of millions of dollars. New pollution on the brownfield site and stirring up existing toxins in Commencement Bay and future cleanup costs concern us.
- Methanol is a solvent and any spill would potentially flush existing toxins into the groundwater and Commencement Bay.

Edward Kolodziej, Ph.D, UWT, Center for Urban Waters, described how methanol easily mixes with water and depletes available oxygen in the water rapidly. Here his map of a potential 'worst-case scenario methanol tanker spill' and how it would affect Puget Sound. The map shows the area being depleted of oxygen due to methanol, killing off by asphyxiation marine life in 8.4 cubic miles.

Impacts from Spill Events and Accidents

"Worst Case" analysis:

1 full tanker into Puget Sound

-1 tanker = 140,000 tons of CH_3OH

-Puget Sound: ~6 mg/L O_2

-One gallon of CH_3OH spilled depletes oxygen in 198,000 gallons of water

-One tanker CH_3OH spilled in the Sound:
9,300,000,000 gallons = 8.4 mi^3
of deoxygenated water



We are concerned about the massive industrial export use of our natural resources. Just last year Tacoma Public Utilities called on all of us to conserve water. Droughts are predicted to become more frequent in the future.

Tacoma is a welcoming city; families and new businesses are moving here for a high quality of living. Future population growth is possible only with adequate and affordable public utilities. Existing tax and rate payers should not subsidize costs associated with new facilities or future expansions of industry. The proposed refinery is already on track to receive a \$ 200 million tax break the first year of operations and \$15 million every year thereafter. That's a giveaway our schools can hardly afford.

Public safety concerns should be top priority for government. How will Tacoma protect area residents and businesses in the event of accidental, uncontained chemical releases or other dangerous incidents? Up to 1,600 people are detained at the ICE detention facility. Another 75 people live at the newly opened Pioneer re-entry house. Normal land use zoning prohibits collocating residences in heavy industrial zones, particularly petrochemical industries. Puget Sound Energy's proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) 87 million gallon production and 8 million gallon storage facility near the methanol refinery exponentially compounds safety concerns.

Considering an earthquake or other natural disaster, NWIW's liability insurance of \$50 million would offer little in the manner of "Acts of God" protections. In the aftermath of the 2014 Japan tsunami, companies declared bankruptcy, leaving communities and municipalities to deal with post-tsunami cleanup and rebuilding. May we remind you: the Fukushima, Japan nuclear plant continues to leak - years after the incident.

Are Tacoma and Port of Tacoma considering escrowing sufficient funds to handle costs beyond general liabilities, reducing risk and exposure in the event deconstruction, decontamination and clean-up of the Tideflats and surrounding region are required? How would existing nearby residents be financially protected from home value losses and higher insurance premiums?

Financial viability is crucial for a massive project with long planning and building phases. NWIW has never built any methanol refinery, or anything else. Can the city and the port ensure local companies and workers are compensated should gas, electricity and water prices rise to where the production and shipping of methanol becomes sufficiently unprofitable that NWIW LLC chooses bankruptcy?

Clean air and water, affordable utilities and safety are crucial to Tacoma's future and to the diverse species inhabiting this beautiful place we call home. In the not-too-distant past, Commencement Bay was called "Shubahlup," or sheltered place, by the Nisqually and

Puyallup People. At one time, the Puyallup tribe included 18,000 acres on the shores of the bay, a rich resource for harvesting salmon and shellfish. We stand in solidarity with the Puyallup tribe, who oppose petrochemical facilities in Commencement Bay.

We encourage and expect Tacoma and the Port of Tacoma to

- Be strong stewards of natural and human resources
- Apply real suitability demands on all projects
- Reject the methanol export facility

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Sims". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Deborah Sims, vice chair

For the Tacoma Central Neighborhood Council