

## Hayden Richardson

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**From:** Jean M. Avery <jeanmavery@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 28, 2023 3:00 PM  
**To:** Planning Department.UserGroup  
**Subject:** For Jan. 10: Please deny NEXT's application

You don't often get email from jeanmavery@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am submitting herewith my written comment for the Public Hearing scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, 2024. I would also like to speak (remotely).

Thank you,  
Jean M. Avery  
Vancouver, WA

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I urge the Commissioners to deny NEXT's latest application for a rail yard and refinery in Columbia County.

First, I support the local farmers, who are fighting to protect their agricultural land.

Equally important, we need to protect sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitats. As you know, Columbia County Zoning Ordinance Section 1562 states that "existing plant materials...shall be protected...." And, from personal experience:

- I've seen this bucolic area from the small ferry that crosses the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington.
- I've been bird-watching along the Lower Columbia River and on Puget Island.
- I've visited the nearby Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the white-tailed deer.
- I work to protect watersheds as a grant writer for a local nonprofit organization.

This is a risky application, because sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitats would be harmed--as noted in several Conditional Use Permit documents:

Per CUP2, Exhibit 6: the plan area spans major waterfowl areas and habitat for the threatened Columbian white-tailed deer.

Per Exhibits 7 and 10: the driveway, rail corridor, and rail branchline cut through wetlands and "freshwater emergent wetlands."

Per Exhibit 14: the proposed site is habitat for four "threatened" species, including the Columbian white-tailed deer, the streaked horned lark, a checkered mallow, and a lupine. This same document cites "anthropogenic alterations," meaning the area has already been degraded by humans. That's no reason to degrade it further!

I urge you to protect this natural area. Please deny NEXT's application.

Thank you,

Jean M. Avery  
Vancouver, WA

