



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **COLUMBIA RIVER THREATENED BY NEW OIL REFINERY AND EXPLOSIVE OIL TRAINS**

**April 15, 2015 (Longview, WA)** – The rapid growth of oil trains in the Pacific Northwest now brings a new threat: a proposal for an unprecedented new oil refinery on the Columbia River. Recently obtained documents show Riverside Refining, LLC, seeking a partnership with the Port of Longview to build an oil refinery in Longview, Washington, supplied by controversial oil-by-rail. This would be the first west coast refinery constructed in over 25 years, and the largest new refinery in the continental [United States since 1976](#).

The proposal to supply the refinery with oil-by-rail makes the project even more controversial. Crude oil trains in North America have exploded a dozen times in the last two years, including an explosion that killed 47 people in Quebec.

“Combining bomb trains, a polluting refinery, and supertankers is an unimaginable risk to our health and the Columbia River,” stated Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director of Columbia Riverkeeper.

There has never been a crude oil refinery on the Columbia River. Oil refineries are hazardous to human health, emitting a toxic soup of carcinogens and neurotoxins. A refinery along the Columbia puts the river and some of the most valuable salmon runs on Earth at dramatic risk.

The oil trains would pass through dozens of cities en route to the refinery. “This is a game changer,” stated Ben Stuckart, Spokane City Council President. “The specter of new refineries served by oil trains threatens every community along the way.”

A PowerPoint slideshow by Riverside Refining spells out detailed plans for building a unit train rail loop to receive oil trains from North Dakota’s Bakken formation, refining the oil, and shipping supertankers of diesel, gasoline, and jet fuel down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. Planning documents show Riverside Refining proposes a 30,000-barrel per day refinery served by unit trains with 100 to 120 cars per train.

“Our community is not a sacrifice zone for oil industry profits,” stated, Longview resident Diane Dick, President of Landowners and Citizens for a Safe Community. “Oil trains and tankers will put our community and the Columbia River in danger.”

“The siting of an oil refinery within the City of Longview, with the inevitable massive discharges of air pollutants and frequent history of fires and explosions we know are associated with refineries, would represent a reckless creation of serious health risks to the entire population of the city,” stated Dr. Bruce Amundson, retired family physician

and President of Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility.

The refinery seeks a 50-year lease, the maximum allowed by state law.

“We’re facing the warmest decade on record and there is a drought declaration in the Yakima Valley where I live,” stated Margie Van Cleve, Chair of the Washington Chapter of the Sierra Club. “Locking ourselves into 50 years of dirty fossil fuel production is absolutely the wrong way to go.”

**The following documents obtained by Columbia Riverkeeper are available here:**

- [Riverside Refining PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding between Riverside and the Port of Longview](#)
- [Riverside Energy Port of Longview Discussion Points](#)

The Columbia River faces unprecedented threats from controversial fossil fuel projects. Longview, Washington, is also the site of the proposed 44-million ton-per-year Millennium Bulk Terminals coal export terminal. There is an operating oil-by-rail terminal (Global Partners) at Port Westward, Oregon, just 10 miles from the proposed refinery. In addition, the nation’s largest oil-by-rail terminal, 360,000 barrels per day, is proposed by Tesoro upstream in Vancouver, Washington, and the City of Portland is evaluating a propane-by-rail terminal. At the mouth of the Columbia River, Oregon LNG proposes to liquefy and export more natural gas per day than used by the entire state of Oregon per day.

This press release was sent on behalf of Columbia Riverkeeper, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Friends of the San Juans, ForestEthics, the Lands Council, Land Owners and Citizens for a Safe Community, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, Washington Environmental Council, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Sierra Club.

###