
MEMORANDUM

To: Liz Fancher, Hearings Officer – T3-2022-16220

Date: 5/5/2025

From: Ian Courter, Lauren Courter

RE: Response to N.61: *Operational Air Quality Analysis*, prepared by Phil Gleason, Environmental Science Associates, April 15, 2025

SUMMARY OF AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS

Environmental Science Associates (ESA) conducted an operational air quality analysis for the Water Filtration Facility and Pipelines Project. The analysis found that air pollutant emissions from facility operations, including those from mobile sources, emergency backup generators, and dry chemical transfers, will remain well below federal thresholds. Emission estimates accounted for worst-case conditions and showed minimal risk of health impacts from diesel particulate matter (DPM). The site's size and location contribute to dispersing emissions effectively, and the project complies with applicable state and federal air quality regulations. ESA concluded that the project will not adversely affect air quality or natural resources during its operation.

RESPONSE TO AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS

While the ESA report concludes that operational emissions from the Bull Run Water Filtration Facility will not exceed federal thresholds, this standard alone does not satisfy the more stringent land use requirements set forth by Multnomah County. Federal "De Minimis" thresholds are designed as broad benchmarks and do not equate to the localized, no impact standard embedded in Multnomah County's rural land use planning codes related to approval criteria for community services—especially in areas designated for resource protection or within proximity to significant environmental features, such as Johnson Creek.

Multnomah County land use policy, particularly in unincorporated and environmentally sensitive areas like those **west of the Sandy River**, emphasizes **no adverse effects on natural resources**. **Natural resources includes air, water, and habitat**. Low levels of diesel particulate matter or other pollutants have the potential to accumulate or impact nearby natural systems (e.g. riparian buffers, wildlife corridors) and rural communities when evaluated on a long-term or cumulative basis.

The ESA report acknowledges that emissions were estimated conservatively but does not include **quantified modeling of localized cumulative impacts**, especially for sensitive receptors such as residents, agricultural uses, or ecological habitats nearby. Moreover, while the report highlights dispersion due to the large site size, this assumption ignores the possibility that prevailing wind

patterns or seasonal atmospheric conditions could concentrate pollutants downwind in areas protected under county land use codes.

Reliance on regulatory compliance as a stand-in for environmental safety falls short of the county's strict condition, which requires projects to show not just regulatory compliance but clear avoidance of environmental harm. The **Cleaner Air Oregon** program does allow projects to proceed under risk thresholds, but Multnomah County's zoning overlays and development conditions imposes stricter requirements for projects in natural resource or EFU (Exclusive Farm Use) and MUA-20 (Multiple Use Agriculture) zones.

CONCLUSION

While the filtration facility may meet federal air quality regulations, this does not equate to compliance with local land use law or community expectations for **zero degradation of environmental quality**.



LUP Hearings <lup-hearings@multco.us>

#T3-2022-16220: Response to N.61

Cottrell CPO <cottrellcpo@gmail.com>
To: LUP Hearings <LUP-hearings@multco.us>

Mon, May 5, 2025 at 10:50 AM



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LUP,

With regards to the remand of T3-2022-16220, attached is our response to N.61 - Operational Air Quality.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Thank you,
Cottrell CPO



Courter Response to N.61 - Operational Air Quality.pdf
112K