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Kalama, Wash. Methanol Refinery Will Use More Gas than The Region's Biggest Cities Combined

Data gathered by our researchers show Kalama Methanol Exports is projected to use staggering volumes of gas, which means simultaneously producing millions of tons of carbon.

Kalama, WA—Kalama Commissioners issued a federal grant [last week](#) to support a methanol refinery that will produce over 150 million dekatherms of gas consumption a year to operate.

The project's backers aim to build the petrochemical plant to convert mostly fracked gas into liquid methanol for export to China's plastics industry and vehicle fleet.

Sightline programs director Eric de Place and contributor Paelina DeStephano show just how all this stacks up in our environment.

The report can be viewed [here](#), in which methods are also elaborated. Use of Sightline-produced graphics and data is permitted under our free use policy, with proper attribution and without alteration. Interviews for and reprints of the full report may be requested through the communications associate. Any use of statements within the report must be properly attributed and, if online, hyperlinked.

“Researchers at Stockholm Environment Institute calculated that simply extracting and transporting the volumes of gas required by the facility could produce [4 million tons of carbon dioxide](#)-equivalent—more than is emitted by every activity in the city of Seattle annually,” De Place writes, “and that’s just the total owing to methane leaks along the supply chain and does not include emissions at the site itself or when the methanol is ultimately used.”

The approval of this facility has remained hotly debated by environmentalists and others within the [Thin Green Line](#), a Cascadian movement pushing to halt fossil fuel exports through activism, permit processes, and regulatory accountability.

Notes for writers on Kalama Methanol Exports:

- Sightline’s researcher, [Tarika Powell](#), does similar research on fossil fuels, but delves into the science and process of materials, extraction, and transport while remaining extremely well-versed in relevant legalities. Powell additionally [testified](#) as an expert against the Port of Tacoma’s EIS on their proposed LNG refinery. Interviews with Powell are available upon request.
- Despite the fossil fuel industry’s strategic messaging that moved toward calling methane gas “natural gas” for the sake of garnering surface level public approval, the gas is more often than not fracked. Hence why we call it fracked gas. These two names, though sounding like opposites, [describe the exact same product](#).
- Cities included in the report were limited to those that had corresponding data available.

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