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**Do We Want a Methanol Plant in Tacoma?**

**Public Talk by Chemist and National Activist Wilma Subra**

*Everyone is welcome to the free talk and Q&A*

*6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, in Kilworth Memorial Chapel*

**TACOMA, Wash.** – The controversial proposal to build the world’s largest methanol plant on Tacoma’s Tideflats will be critiqued at a free public presentation by environmental chemist and activist Wilma Subra.

Subra will give the talk “Environmental and Human Health Impacts of Methanol Plants,” starting at 6 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 25, in Kilworth Memorial Chapel, on campus. The talk and Q&A is sponsored by the university’s Sound Policy Institute and The Sierra Club’s Tatoosh Group of Pierce County. The Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club is opposed to the methanol project.

“We hope to make this session on the proposed methanol plant an informative one and an opportunity for people in the community to get scientific answers to questions they may have,” said Daniel Sherman, director of the university’s [Sound Policy Institute](http://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/academic-resources/sound-policy-institute/). “Wilma Subra is a respected environmental health evaluator, with broad experience in the field, and we welcome her observations and ideas.”

Subra, a [MacArthur Genius Award](https://www.macfound.org/fellows/625/) winner, has been fighting for decades to protect the interests of Louisiana residents who live in an area dubbed “[Cancer Alley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cancer_Alley),” along the Mississippi River. Clusters of cancer patients have been diagnosed in the region, with many blaming the nearby industrial plants.

In Tacoma, a Chinese-backed company called [Northwest Innovation Works](http://nwinnovationworks.com/) has proposed building a plant on the Port of Tacoma that would convert natural gas delivered to the site by an underground pipe into methanol. The [flammable liquid would be taken by tanker ship](http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/politics-government/article47202115.html) to a plant in China to be used in making a plastic-like substance for products such as cellphones, furniture, and carpet.

Residents in the Tacoma area have already attended [one packed hearing](http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/politics-government/article55994440.html) held by city officials to disseminate information about the methanol plant plans. Opponents fear the plant could affect air and water quality, or that it could lead to a dangerous explosion. Some union members, who expect 1,000 construction jobs and 260 permanent jobs, have backed the proposal. The Port of Tacoma agreed to lease the waterfront property in 2014, and the plan is currently undergoing environmental studies.

[Wilma Subra](https://leanweb.org/uncategorized/wilma-subra/) is the founder of Subra Company, a chemistry laboratory and environmental consulting firm in Louisiana. The company works with community groups providing technical research and evaluation of projects that could lead to environmental health concerns. Subra fought, and successfully closed, an oil waste incinerator in Louisiana that was using hazardous waste as fuel, and she has provided technical assistance to communities near the polluted Hunters Point Shipyard in San Francisco, and to others living near the Port of New Orleans, where Italian nuclear waste was to be imported.

Subra has served on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology, on the National Advisory Committee of the U.S. Representative to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and on the EPA National Environmental Justice Advisory Council. In 2011 she won the Global Exchange Human Rights Award for her work with the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and with the communities affected by it. Subra appeared in the 2010 documentary *Gasland*, which focuses on U.S. communities affected by oil and gas fracking.

The Sound Policy Institute at University of Puget Sound aims to educate and empower individuals, on campus and regionally, to effectively engage in protecting their own communities against environmental threats and in creating a sustainable environment for future generations.

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**Press photos** of Wilma Subra are available upon request.

**Tweet this**: Learn about #methanolplant planned for #Tacoma from Wilma Subra, chemist, green activist

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