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PROPOSED COAL EXPORT TERMINAL IN SW WASHINGTON WILL CAUSE SIGNIFICANT AND LONG-LASTING HARM TO PEOPLE, COMMUNITY, CLIMATE, AND COLUMBIA RIVER

State Agency and County Release Final Review for Largest Proposed Coal Export Terminal in North America

April 28, 2017 (LONGVIEW, WA) – Today, the Washington State Department of Ecology and Cowlitz County released the [final environmental impact statement](#) (FEIS) for the proposed Millennium Bulk Terminals project in Longview, Washington, the last remaining coal export terminal proposed in the Pacific Northwest. State agencies and Cowlitz County will use the FEIS to decide whether to issue or deny permits to Millennium. “The multiple findings of significant, adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated mean that Ecology and Cowlitz County should deny Millennium’s permit applications. Any other outcome would be scientifically and legally unsupported,” states Jan Hasselman, Staff Attorney with Earthjustice.

[A summary of key findings from the FEIS is available here.](#)

Community leaders and experts from around the region offered their response to the final environmental review:

“Doctors, parents, farmers, business owners, and many others have spoken out in unprecedented force against Millennium’s dirty coal export project. This environmental review validates many of their concerns about how coal export will harm our climate, health, and Columbia River. Now we look to state leaders to stand up to the coal industry and deny all permits for Millennium,” said Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, Co-Director, Power Past Coal coalition.

“The FEIS falls short in a number of respects. It continues to treat coal dust dismissively. It doesn’t incorporate the findings of a separate Health Impact Assessment that is underway. And it seriously underestimates the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that this project would have, ignoring extensive technical criticism of the draft. Even with these failings, it nonetheless documents a host of totally unacceptable impacts that by themselves should easily trigger denial from the state and local regulatory agencies. It’s time to move on,” said Kristen Boyles, Staff Attorney with Earthjustice.

“We’re resisting the threat of 16 uncovered, noisy coal trains running through our community every day. Toxic diesel emissions, coal dust, and delayed emergency response threaten all of us, but especially young children, the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions. Low-income and frontline neighborhoods will be hit hardest by increased cancer risks, as was confirmed in the document released today. As a cancer doctor, I’m acutely aware that we must prevent what we cannot cure; we simply cannot allow this dangerous project to proceed,” said Dr. Stephen Chandler of Longview.

“The coal industry cannot be revived. It’s being replaced across the country and around the globe by renewable energy. Longview needs real economic solutions, not a dead-end industry that pollutes our air and clogs our railways,” said Chris Hill, Landowners and Citizens for a Safe Community.

“The coal dust from coal trains traveling through the Columbia River Gorge and its communities would have unacceptable impacts on air quality and the environment,” said Michael Lang, Conservation Director for Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

“This is an important step in protecting the clean water I need as a rancher in southeast Montana. Coal mining, transport, and burning threatens the streams, rivers, and aquifers we ranchers in southeast Montana depend

on for our livelihoods,” said Mark Fix, a rancher in southeastern Montana and a spokesperson for Northern Plains Resource Council, a Montana-based family agriculture and conservation group.

Background

The controversial coal export proposal drew close to 500,000 public comments; thousands of residents packed hearings in opposition to the project due to its wide ranging health, transportation, environmental, and economic harm. These include the loss to businesses from increased traffic congestion, increased financial burdens for communities to pay for upgrades at rail crossings, harm to commercial and recreational fisheries due to impacts to water quality from coal trains, tankers, and eight-story coal piles at the terminal site, decreased property values, and increased health care costs.

The [draft EIS](#), published in April 2016, identified many of these impacts. Local elected and community leaders, Tribes, federal and state agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency, and conservation groups will be looking for the state to more fully acknowledge these risks and harms in the FEIS.

If built, the project would mean up to 44 million tons of coal per year being shipped through the Pacific Northwest to Asia to be burned in power plants. The project would cause up to eight fully loaded coal trains a day to travel from Wyoming to Longview, distributing toxic coal dust through local communities along the way, and up to 1,680 additional bulk cargo vessels coming through the mouth of the Columbia River (the second largest river in North America) every year.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources denied Millennium one key approval in January 2017 when it rejected a necessary sublease due to the company’s unclear business plan, associated bankruptcies, prior misrepresentations, and market conditions in Asia rapidly turning away from coal and towards cleaner energy sources.

The company has [appealed DNR’s decision](#) in Cowlitz County Superior Court. Power Past Coal partner groups Columbia Riverkeeper, Sierra Club, and Washington Environmental Council, represented by Earthjustice, have intervened to defend the DNR decision.

Resources

[Key Findings of Millennium FEIS](#)

[NEPA/SEPA website](#)

[Power Past Coal](#)

[History of fight against Millennium Bulk Terminals project](#)

[Press release from Power Past Coal following Department of Natural Resources’ denial of needed sublease in January](#)

[Press release from draft environmental impact study public hearing in November 2016](#)

[Columbia Riverkeeper et al June 2016 Comments on MBT](#)

[British Columbia’s Premier Christy Clark earlier this week requested that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stop the export of U.S. coal out of](#)

[British Columbia’s ports yesterday, “That coal, most of it is American but not all of it that’s shipped through our ports, is dirty. It fouls the air. It fouls the oceans. It’s terrible for the environment.”](#)

POWER PAST COAL is an ever-growing alliance of health, environmental, clean-energy, faith and community groups and businesses working to stop coal export off the West Coast. Powerpastcoal.org

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