

Earlier this week, I listened to public testimony for and against the purposed Longview coal terminal. Those favoring the construction of the terminal largely stated that it would bring local jobs to the city. Millennium Bulk's purposed coal terminal would provide approximately 100 permanent jobs to a city of 36,530. Meanwhile, it and the exported coal will produce 1.4 to 3.2 million metric tons of greenhouse gases annually. The equivalent of almost 676,000 passenger cars being driven for one year according to the EPA. Further considering that the terminal would put strain on an already nearing-capacity railway system, this problem seems like it could only get worse than estimated. Early this year, CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere surpassed the critical threshold of 400 parts per million. This number will only get higher, and building a new coal terminal only adds to the problem. We as a nation need to move away from fossil fuels and invest more in clean energy. Exporting massive quantities to foreign markets does not achieve this goal. We all have to share the same atmosphere. The relatively few permanent jobs that would be created are not worth the environmental price.

In addition to the heavy atmospheric toll the coal and terminal would take, there is the matter of the coal dust. Very little information seems to be available on the true effects of coal dust. A lack of research does not mean that something is safe or not a problem, it only means we do not know how bad the effects will be. It seems inconceivable that coal dust would not be problematic. Coal mining is one of the most dangerous jobs in the country, largely because of the amount of dust that is inhaled in the process. The amount of dust inhaled by terminal workers and people near the railway would likely be less, but even this is not known. What is known, is that the effects on children would be greater than on adults and that the train tracks pass near schools and homes. Estimates for how much coal dust is lost in transit are high. Even coal loads that have been coated in a chemical suppressant prior to transport are estimated to lose approximately 100 pounds of coal dust per train car for every 400 miles of transit. The average train would have 125 cars, and 8 trains will unload coal every day in Longview; that means that 100,000 pounds of coal dust would be deposited across Washington every day. We live in a beautiful state with relatively clean air, let's keep it that way.