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May 20, 2016

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To the members of the Washington State Dept. of Ecology and Cowlitz County who are responsible for the current phase of the Millennium DEIS, I wish to say, at the risk of sounding overly dramatic, that you are in the position of making decisions that could mean horrendous consequences for thousands of people, or healthy alternatives for those same people, whose lives truly are in your hands at this time in our history.

As you consider the impact statement, please look first of all at an issue that doesn't seem to be mentioned, because, I suppose it isn't technically "environmental," but perhaps we should begin to include more ethical considerations! Millennium began its relationship with the community of Longview not with an insignificant little misstatement, but with a big intentional lie. Should Millennium be welcomed to the city now? For a promise of what? Perhaps 20 odd permanent jobs in the future? Does coal have a future? Should coal have a future?

So much of this issue needs to be examined in great depth. Take, for example, the effect of use and transport of coal upon HEALTH. The health of people is affected all the way from the Powder River in Montana and Wyoming to the Asian nations where it will probably be burned to... back to Washington, Oregon, California, British Columbia, where we will breathe in the putrid pollution. In Longview, of course, the people whose health will be most heavily affected by the toxic environment created by the plant itself and the incoming trains, will be those with the lowest incomes and least political clout, as always.

Please consider, too, that it is not only human health that is affected, but also plant and animal life on all the land and water along the way between Wyoming and Asia. And, too, there are also a great many commercial enterprises established along the coal routes, so you would be wise to think about this economic health in its entirety. We know the coal companies are busy looking out for their economic well being!

The DEIS as it exists now does not seem to make much mention of coal dust. Really? 500 lbs of coal dust per car on trains that have over 100 cars? Many trains each day? THAT HAS AN IMPACT! As do exhaust emissions from the trains themselves. As do

traffic problems in communities in which train tracks separate one part of the city from another.

The DEIS does, I see, acknowledge the potential for eleven additional rail accidents each year, plus one every year in Longview. Does this strike you as a statistic that presents a desirable projection into the future? How many lives need to be at risk before you become unwilling to sign off on something like this?

The over-arching issue, of course, is that we need to stop the burning of coal, not increase it! It seems as if the whole world is aware of the reality of climate change, its causes and its effects. The United States, dominated still by the greed of corporations, seems to be blind. We are on the brink of disaster. You have it in your power to stop one part of the madness. Please, please do so!

Sincerely,

Bonnie Hefty

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