

May 22, 2016

Dear Washington Department of Ecology and Cowlitz County:

I am writing as a citizen of Montana in response to the draft environmental impact statement produced for the Longview coal port. I am 94 years old and I remember when we could breathe clean air and drink pure water. Now we live in a day when corporations override the rights of citizens, and government more often than not assists the corporations against the will of the people.

The draft EIS is deficient in its coverage of Missoula and the state of Montana. The document acknowledges that there will be rail impacts to Montana, but provides no details which to me means you haven't really thought it through or worse, you have dismissed Montanans as being of your concern.

The proposed Longview facility would negatively impact the public safety and human health of Montanans. The projected 16 additional trains traveling through rail communities such as Missoula each day would increase noise, traffic, lung and heart health problems.

Shipping coal to be burned anywhere ultimately increases global greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change. We are already feeling the impact of climate change in our gardens (2.5 months extension on growing season in just 2 years) and in the number of our days above 100 degrees.

In Montana, as a result of climate change, we face an increased risk of wildfires, which threaten lives, property, public land and species. Smoke also affects air quality and health. Last year in Missoula, we breathed a month of smoke from fires, and it is projected to only get worse.

Our earlier snowmelt and longer summers do to global warming is impacting critical water resources. Coal exports create added pressure for new Montana mines in a region where water is rare and coal seams are important aquifers. Increased mining threatens our land, water and climate.

Nearly 200 nations met in Paris last year and agreed to rapidly reduce greenhouse gases and climate change risks by lowering emissions from fossil fuels. We know we must keep the vast majority of fossil fuels in the ground to avoid catastrophic climate change. It makes no sense to build new coal export infrastructure that would lock us into decades of additional pollution and carbon emissions.

Instead of investing in new coal infrastructure, we should be investing in clean energy. For example, America's solar industry is growing 20 times faster than the rest of the U.S. economy. We must focus on a just transition to the new clean energy economy for fossil-fuel dependent communities.

I urge you to deny the permit for the proposed coal port in Longview.

Sincerely,

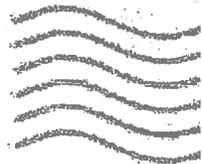


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