

I have traveled here today from my home in Mosier in the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area to support the "no action" alternative in the Millennium Bulk Terminals Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The other alternative would mean that an increased number of trains carrying coal in uncovered cars to this Longview, WA facility would pass near my home and many others in the Columbia River Gorge. Many of us who live in the gorge have witnessed coal dust blowing and falling off existing coal trains and contaminating the air and water. At some key sites in the Columbia River Gorge the problem is so severe that coal accumulates in inches-thick layers from the tracks to the banks of the Columbia River. Coal is being discharged directly into the Columbia River and its tributaries in violation of the Clean Water Act.

The DEIS fails to adequately consider the amount of coal dust being discharged from the trains, the impacts of this coal dust on the scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and the clear violations of the federal Clean Water Act that would result from the project.

Coal is extremely toxic and coal dust in the air contributes to respiratory illness. My wife has personally experienced the new onset of asthma. The project harms our health and safety, air and water quality, and natural resources. I urge your agencies to protect public health and the environment by rejecting this coal export terminal. Coal export undermines the state's hard work to combat climate change and protect future generations.

While the draft EIS reveals many intolerable serious impacts to human health and the environment, it dismisses other impacts without a valid basis. I urge the agencies to incorporate the best available science, real world examples, and the Health Impact Assessment in the Final EIS.

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is just one of many protected and sensitive areas that would be negatively impacted by coal trains that would service this Longview facility. Wetlands, wildlife refuges, state parks, tribal fishing areas, critical fish, wildlife and plant habitat, recreation, and scenic resources would be harmed by the impacts of this facility, its trains, and the expansion of rail lines needed to accommodate the increase in rail traffic.

The Draft EIS demonstrates Millennium would have a severe impact on rail and road congestion. Because Millennium cannot fix this significant harm, from mine to terminal, the agencies should deny permits.

In some instances, the Draft EIS claims mitigation can reduce coal dust, rail traffic, and other project impacts. For example, to mitigate coal dust from the terminal, the Draft EIS proposes a reporting process for coal dust complaints. This is unacceptable. A phone call or email to complain about coal dust fouling a person's lungs, home, and river is not "mitigation."

I do not believe we should expose the people and the environment of the Pacific Northwest to these dangers in order to export coal to be burned in other countries many of which have very weak environmental standards.

The agencies should revise the Draft EIS and remove inadequate, unsupported, and unenforceable mitigation.

Sincerely,

~~William L. White~~

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