



MILLENNIUM Bulk Terminals - Longview  
**EIS** Environmental Impact Statements

DRAFT Scoping Report  
Millennium Bulk Terminals-Longview  
NEPA Environmental Impact Statement

February 2014



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Seattle District



# **SCOPING REPORT**

## **MILLENNIUM BULK TERMINALS—LONGVIEW NEPA ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

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# Contents

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List of Tables .....	iii
List of Figures.....	iv
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	iv
	<b>Page</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
1.1 Proposal Overview and Context .....	1-1
1.2 Co-Lead Agencies .....	1-1
1.3 Scoping Process Purpose .....	1-2
<b>Chapter 2 Scoping Purpose.....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
2.1 Providing Comments.....	2-1
2.2 Public Scoping Purpose .....	2-1
2.3 Public Involvement Plan.....	2-2
2.4 Notification of Public Scoping .....	2-2
2.4.1 NEPA and SEPA Notifications.....	2-2
2.4.2 Public and Media Notifications.....	2-3
2.5 Public and Agency Scoping Meetings .....	2-4
2.5.1 Open House Exhibits .....	2-4
2.5.2 Receiving Scoping Comments at Scoping Meetings .....	2-5
2.5.3 Online Scoping Meeting.....	2-5
<b>Chapter 3 Public Comments Received .....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
3.1 Public Scoping Meetings .....	3-1
3.1.1 Longview .....	3-1
3.1.2 Spokane.....	3-2
3.1.3 Pasco .....	3-2
3.1.4 Clark County.....	3-3
3.1.5 Tacoma.....	3-3
3.2 Agency and Tribal Scoping Meetings.....	3-3
3.3 Online Web Form, Email, and Postal Mail Comments.....	3-4
3.4 Mass Mailing Comments.....	3-4
<b>Chapter 4 Agency, Tribal, and Elected Official Comments .....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
4.1 Federal Agency Comments .....	4-1
4.2 Tribal Comments.....	4-1
4.3 State Agency and State-Elected Official Comments .....	4-1

4.4 Local Agency and Locally Elected Official Comments ..... 4-2

4.5 Other Agency/Organization Comments ..... 4-3

4.6 Agency/Organization Comments Addressed to the Corps ..... 4-5

**Chapter 5 Summary of Comments ..... 5-1**

5.1 Introduction ..... 5-1

5.2 Comments Addressed to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ..... 5-1

5.2.1 Air Quality ..... 5-1

5.2.2 Water Quality..... 5-2

5.2.3 Terrestrial and Aquatic Resources ..... 5-2

5.2.4 Land Use, Shoreline, Visual Resources, and Recreation ..... 5-2

5.2.5 Tribes ..... 5-2

5.2.6 Transportation ..... 5-3

5.2.7 Socioeconomics ..... 5-3

5.2.8 Cumulative Effects ..... 5-3

5.2.9 NEPA Process ..... 5-3

5.3 Applicant’s Stated Purpose and Need ..... 5-3

5.4 Issues of Concern ..... 5-4

5.4.1 Geology and Soils..... 5-4

5.4.2 Air Quality ..... 5-5

5.4.3 Energy/Greenhouse Gases ..... 5-9

5.4.4 Water Resources..... 5-11

5.4.5 Wetlands ..... 5-14

5.4.6 Terrestrial Wildlife and Vegetation..... 5-14

5.4.7 Aquatic Resources..... 5-16

5.4.8 Noise and Vibration ..... 5-20

5.4.9 Land Use, Shoreline, Visual Resources and Recreation ..... 5-20

5.4.10 Tribes, including Indian Fishing and Fishing Treaty Rights..... 5-22

5.4.11 Cultural, Historic, and Archeological Resources..... 5-23

5.4.12 Transportation..... 5-24

5.4.13 Vessel Traffic ..... 5-28

5.4.14 Social Impacts and Socioeconomics ..... 5-30

5.4.15 Visual Resources..... 5-33

5.4.16 Public Services and Utilities..... 5-33

5.4.17 Human Health ..... 5-34

5.4.18 Cumulative Effects..... 5-35

5.5 Project Alternatives ..... 5-41

5.5.1 No Action Alternative ..... 5-41

5.5.2 Identification of an Alternative Site for a Terminal ..... 5-41

5.5.3 Other Proposed Alternatives ..... 5-42

5.6 Other Topics..... 5-43

**Chapter 6 Next Steps..... 6-1**

  

**Appendix A NEPA Notice of Intent and SEPA Determination of Significance**

**Appendix B Scoping Display Advertisements and Informational Flyer**

**Appendix C Scoping Meeting Display Boards**

**Appendix D Agency and Tribal Cooperating Agency Letters**

## Tables

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	<b>Page</b>
Table 2-1. Typical NEPA Study Areas.....	2-2
Table 2-2. NEPA Open House Scoping Meetings.....	2-4
Table 2-3. SEPA Open House Scoping Meetings .....	2-4
Table 3-1. Longview Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics.....	3-2
Table 3-2. Spokane Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics .....	3-2
Table 3-3. Pasco Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics.....	3-2
Table 3-4. Clark County Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics .....	3-3
Table 3-5. Tacoma Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics .....	3-3
Table 3-6. Web Form, Email, and U.S. Mail Comment Statistics.....	3-4
Table 3-7. Mass Mailing Comment Statistics.....	3-4

## Figures

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Figure 6-1. NEPA EIS Process and Next Steps .....	6-1
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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APE	area of potential effects
Applicant	Millennium, LLC
BNSF	BNSF Railway Company
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration
Co-Lead Agencies	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of Ecology, Cowlitz County
Corps	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
DNR	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DS	Determination of Significance
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
EIS	environmental impact statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	U.S. Endangered Species Act
GHG	greenhouse gas
GPT	Gateway Pacific Terminal
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
MBTL	Millennium Bulk Terminals–Longview
MCTA	Washington State Model Toxic Control Act
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
PIP	Public Involvement Plan
PM10	particulate matter 10
Proposed Action	Millennium Bulk Terminals – Longview Proposal
SEPA	Washington State Environmental Policy Act
SR	State Route
WAC	Washington Administrative Code

## 1.1 Proposal Overview and Context

Millennium, LLC (Applicant) is proposing to construct a shipping terminal to export coal at the site of the former Reynolds Metals aluminum plant adjacent to the Columbia River near Longview, Washington. The property is approximately 540 acres with frontage on the Columbia River. The proposed Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview proposal (Proposed Action) would cover approximately 190 acres of the site. The Proposed Action would also involve extensive work in the Columbia River including approximately five acres of overwater structures, 48 acres of dredging between the proposed piers and federal navigation channel, and an undetermined number of in-water dredged material disposal sites in the navigation channel.

As proposed, the facility would be capable of receiving, stockpiling, blending, and loading coal by conveyor onto ships for export. The Applicant proposes bringing coal in by rail to the site, storing coal at the facility, and exporting coal on ships.

The proposal includes two stages. Under Stage 1, up to 25 million metric tons of coal would be handled. Under Stage 2, the maximum volume would increase to 44 million metric tons of coal. The complete proposed facility would involve construction of an eight-train rail loop two new ship loading docks and one trestle over the Columbia River; coal handling and stockpiling facilities, and other associated facilities and infrastructure. The proposal would also involve periodic dredging of a 48-acre ship berthing area and in-river disposal of the dredged material.

## 1.2 Co-Lead Agencies

Constructing and operating this proposed facility would require federal, state, and local permits and other permissions. Before applications for these permits and permissions are considered, an environmental review must be completed. Three agencies—the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), and Cowlitz County (collectively the Co-Lead Agencies), are responsible for issuing these permits and permissions.

Prior to issuing permits, the Corps must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Ecology and Cowlitz County must comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Both NEPA and SEPA require an objective and unbiased environmental review before making decisions on any permit. The Co-Lead Agencies are responsible for providing this objective review of the proposed project and opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental review process.

The Co-Lead Agencies are preparing separate environmental impact statements (EISs) to document the effects of the Proposed Action. Although separate EIS documents will be prepared, they will be produced in a coordinated process, and the Co-Lead Agencies remain committed to collaboration and sharing information to efficiently make decisions.

## 1.3 Scoping Process Purpose

Scoping is the initial step in the NEPA and SEPA environmental review process. The Co-Lead Agencies held a 90-day scoping comment period from August 16, to November 18, 2013. During this time, the public, agencies, and Native American tribes were able to learn about the Proposed Action and the NEPA and SEPA EIS process and provide scoping comments.

The purpose of scoping is to determine the "scope" or content of an EIS. The scope identifies the potential environmental impacts and alternatives that need to be evaluated. The scoping process allows the public, communities, tribes, and agencies to recommend impacts and alternatives to evaluate in the EIS and help identify issues and concerns. Public comments on the scope of each EIS will help the Co-Lead Agencies determine what should be addressed in each document.

Comments may address the following issues.

- A reasonable range of alternatives (identification of an alternative site for a terminal, or identification of an alternative approach to bulk material handling that achieves the Proposed Action's objective).
- Potentially affected resources and the extent of analyses (identification of natural, cultural, or community resources that could potentially be affected and the extent of study and analyses needed to understand the potential impacts).
- Significant unavoidable adverse impacts.
- Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate (offset) effects of the Proposed Action.

Although two EIS documents are being prepared, the Co-Lead Agencies engaged in a joint scoping process, including selected meetings, media releases, and comment submittal methods. Opportunity was also available for commenters to identify if they were commenting on the NEPA EIS, the SEPA EIS, or both. However, regardless of the commenter's choice, each comment was reviewed by the EIS team for applicability under NEPA and SEPA.

This scoping report summarizes over 215,000 comments collected at in-person scoping meetings, online, and in writing, and it provides an overview of public outreach activities. After considering the comments, the Co-Lead Agencies will decide what should be studied in their respective EISs.

This scoping report is for the purpose of describing the scoping process and the comments received.

## 2.1 Providing Comments

During the scoping process, the Co-Lead Agencies provided multiple opportunities for interested members of the public to learn about the Proposed Action and the EIS process and to provide scoping comments.

The Co-Lead Agencies invited members of the public, government agencies, Native American tribes, and other organizations to provide scoping comments through the following methods.

- Sending a hardcopy comment by mail to the Co-Lead Agencies in care of ICF International, 710 Second Avenue, Suite 550, Seattle, WA 98104.
- Submitting a written comment form, made available at the scoping meetings, which could be submitted at a drop box at the meeting or mailed to ICF International.
- Using the online comment form on the Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview EIS website ([www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov](http://www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov)).
- Submitting a comment by email ([comments@millenniumbulkeiswa.gov](mailto:comments@millenniumbulkeiswa.gov)).
- Making a public verbal comment at the microphone at a scoping meeting.
- Providing an individual verbal comment at a scoping meeting.

All comments received were posted on the website so users could review other individuals' comments or their own. All comments are available in a searchable format under name, city, date, or comment topic. When many copies of the same comment were received, the comments were reviewed separately, but uploaded as one document. Similarly, some organizations collected a large number of comments from individuals and then submitted them in one package; these were also uploaded as one document, in the same format in which they were submitted.

## 2.2 Public Scoping Purpose

Scoping is the first step in the NEPA EIS process and identifies potential issues to be studied in the NEPA EIS. The purpose of scoping is to assist the Corps in identifying pertinent issues, public concerns, and alternatives, and the depth of the evaluation of these issues and concerns. Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the Proposed Action's activities will be analyzed in the NEPA EIS.

Federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes, and the general public were invited to participate in the scoping process by providing comments, attending public scoping meetings, or participating in the "online scoping meeting" continuously hosted on the EIS website.

Interested parties were invited to comment on issues or concerns of importance to them. Table 2-1 provides a list of NEPA topics identified by the Corps for scoping comments.

**Table 2-1. Typical NEPA Study Areas**

<b>Alphabetical Listing of NEPA Resource Areas</b>		
Air Quality	Hazardous Materials	Utilities
Archeological, Cultural, and Historic Resources	Land Use	Vegetation
Energy	Noise and Vibration	Visual Resources
Environmental Justice	Parks and Recreation	Water Resources
Fisheries	Socioeconomics	Wetlands
Floodplains	Soils and Geology	Wildlife, including Threatened and Endangered Species
	Transportation	

## 2.3 Public Involvement Plan

The Co-Lead Agencies released the Final Public Involvement Plan (PIP) in October 2013, which served as a guide to inform and involve interested parties in the public scoping process. The PIP outlines the objectives, methods, strategies, outreach activities, and schedule for the public involvement program to promote awareness of the Proposed Action and encourage public comments during the scoping period.

The Co-Lead Agencies developed the following objectives to guide the public involvement process.

- Conduct a thorough, impartial, and transparent public review process that informs the development of the separate Draft and Final EIS documents.
- Provide clear milestones for public participation.
- Effectively and efficiently share with, and obtain information from the public and stakeholders during the coordinated NEPA and SEPA EIS development process.
- Meet or exceed federal, state, and local requirements for public involvement, as defined by the NEPA and SEPA processes.

The PIP identifies multiple pathways to learn about the Proposed Action: project website, scoping meetings/open houses, printed informational materials, and one-on-one stakeholder interviews.

Also contained in the PIP, is a discussion of the targeted environmental justice outreach provided to neighborhoods nearest to the proposed MBTL facility in Cowlitz County/Longview showing both Hispanic and low-income populations.

The PIP is available for review on the EIS website ([www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov](http://www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov)).

## 2.4 Notification of Public Scoping

### 2.4.1 NEPA and SEPA Notifications

On July 29, 2013, the Corps issued its Notice of Intent (NOI), initiating the start of the NEPA EIS process. The NOI appeared in the August 14, 2013 *Federal Register*. Following release of the NOI, on

August 9, 2013, Cowlitz County issued a Determination of Significance (DS), thus triggering the requirement to prepare a SEPA EIS. In addition to the *Washington State Register* and *Federal Register*, the Co-Lead Agencies also issued a press release announcing the start of public scoping. The initial NOI and DS identified a combined NEPA/SEPA process. Once it was determined that a separate EIS would be prepared for NEPA and SEPA, a revised NOI (September 6, 2013) and DS (September 9, 2013) were issued.

Scoping notices can be found in **Appendix A** of this document.

## 2.4.2 Public and Media Notifications

A broad-based, multimedia approach was used to notify the public about the Proposed Action and of the purpose, time, and location of the scoping meetings.

### 2.4.2.1 Website

Agency and EIS websites were used throughout public scoping for announcements and as a repository for scoping materials and information. As such, the Co-Lead Agencies emphasized the availability of the website.

- The EIS website address ([www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov](http://www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov)) was included in all news releases and informational materials and identified as the project information hub and portal for submitting comments during the scoping period.
- The website address was provided to each scoping meeting venue for incorporation into venue websites.

### 2.4.2.2 Media Releases

Standard press releases, as well as social media (Twitter), were used to inform the public of the scoping process, scoping meetings, and comment opportunities.

- Media releases from the Co-Lead Agencies were distributed 7 days before each meeting, with designated contacts listed for reporter follow-ups.
- Care was taken to ensure that notices of meetings reached minority or low-income residents.

### 2.4.2.3 Public Notices

- Display ads were placed in local newspapers where scoping meetings were held, including The Spokane Spokesman-Review, The Tri-City Herald (Pasco), The Columbian (Vancouver/Clark County), The Longview Daily News, and The Tacoma News-Tribune.
- Announcements were sent to the MBTL EIS LISTSERV group ([listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A0=WA-MILLENNIUM-EIS](mailto:listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A0=WA-MILLENNIUM-EIS)).
- An informational flyer was mailed to 6,000 residents in neighborhoods near the Proposed Action site, including the Highlands neighborhood.

**Appendix B** contains display ads and the informational flyer.

## 2.5 Public and Agency Scoping Meetings

The Corps conducted two scoping meetings for NEPA EIS comments. Cowlitz County and Ecology held five meetings to take SEPA-related comments. The two Corps-sponsored meetings preceded the two meetings sponsored by the County and Ecology in Longview and Clark County.

**Table 2-2. NEPA Open House Scoping Meetings**

City	Meeting Date and Time	Venue
Longview	Tuesday, September 17, 2013 Noon to 4 p.m.	Cowlitz County Expo Center
Clark County	Wednesday, October 9, 2013 Noon to 4 p.m.	Clark County Fairgrounds

**Table 2-3. SEPA Open House Scoping Meetings**

City	Meeting Date and Time	Venue
Longview	Tuesday, September 17, 2013 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.	Cowlitz County Expo Center
Spokane	Wednesday, September 25, 2013 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.	Spokane Convention Center
Pasco	Tuesday, October 1, 2013 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.	The Trac Center
Clark County	Wednesday, October 9, 2013 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.	Clark County Fairgrounds
Tacoma	Thursday, October 17, 2013 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.	Tacoma Convention Center

All meetings used an open-house format to provide EIS process information and details about the Proposed Action and to receive scoping comments. The same exhibits and informational materials were used in all of the meetings for consistency and were available on the website.

Each meeting venue included the following elements.

- Welcome and check in table.
- Open house exhibits.
- Public oral comment area.
- Semi-private oral comment area.
- Quiet area with tables and comment forms to make written comments.

### 2.5.1 Open House Exhibits

The open house exhibits provided information about the following items.

- MBTL proposal.
- Steps for developing Draft and Final EIS documents.
- General project timeline.
- Guidance on providing comments during the scoping period.
- Information on how the comments will be used.

Staff was available in the exhibit area to answer questions and to provide information. **Appendix C** provides copies of the scoping meeting exhibits.

## 2.5.2 Receiving Scoping Comments at Scoping Meetings

As noted previously, attendees at the scoping meeting could comment orally or in writing.

At each scoping meeting, comment forms were available to attendees at designated comment tables. The comment forms included the website and email address as alternative, convenient ways to submit comments. A staff person was stationed near each comment table to provide assistance and ensure adequate supplies of forms and pens.

Oral comments could be made in a semi-private “quiet room” area adjacent to the meeting exhibits, or before the larger audience in the main auditorium. Court reporters transcribed the comments in both locations. Because of the many people wishing to make comments before the auditorium audience, speakers were chosen by lottery and allowed two minutes for their comments.

People wishing to speak before the entire audience were given a lottery ticket, one half of which went into a box. When the meeting started, meeting managers drew 10 tickets and called out the numbers; the numbers were also projected onto a screen at the front of the auditorium. As needed, five additional numbers were called to replenish the speaker queue. Designated speakers were allowed to swap tickets.

During the scoping meeting comment period, the first 10 minutes of each hour were allotted to local elected officials and tribal representatives on a first-come, first-served basis.

A facilitator managed the public comment period at the meetings, explaining the ground rules, calling speakers forward, and maintaining order.

## 2.5.3 Online Scoping Meeting

In addition to the in-person public scoping meetings, the EIS process website hosted an online scoping meeting. After viewing scoping meeting exhibits and other information about the Proposed Action and the NEPA EIS process, participants could submit comments through an online comment form or via email. The online meeting ran for the duration of the 90-day scoping period.

## Chapter 3

# Public Comments Received

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In total, 215,486 comments were received during the 90-day scoping comment period. Of the 215,486 submissions received, approximately 212,564 were from mass mail campaigns. Of the roughly 3,000 unique submissions, approximately 2,000 were found to contain substantive text. As mentioned in the previous chapter, scoping comments were received in a variety of ways including via electronic, written, and verbal forms. Electronic comments include those that were submitted online through the EIS website or via email to a designated email address. Written comments included unique letters, form letters, or comment cards that were received through U.S. Mail or at the public scoping meetings. Verbal commenting was offered at the public scoping meetings, where people chose to submit their comments by presenting them before the audience, or to a court reporter in a semi-private setting room. The discussion below presents an overview of all public scoping comments received.

### 3.1 Public Scoping Meetings

The NEPA and SEPA scoping meetings yielded nearly 4,000 attendees and 1,334 scoping comments combined. Comments were submitted verbally, either before an audience or in a semi-private setting room with a court reporter, or written via comment cards or unique letters. Comment cards included those provided by the Co-Lead Agencies at each meeting (referred to hereafter as MBTL Comment Cards) and others were provided at several of the meetings by the Power Past Coal and Sierra Club organizations (hereafter referred to as PPC Comment Cards/SC Comment Cards). The following subsections summarize meeting attendance and comment totals provided at each meeting.

#### 3.1.1 Longview

The public scoping meeting held in Longview had an approximate attendance of 1,300. Comments submitted at this public scoping meeting totaled 436. Of these, 174 were submitted as comment cards, including 149 MBTL Comment Cards and 25 PPC Comment Cards. Unique letters were also submitted at this meeting as comments, totaling 50. Lastly, 212 comments were submitted verbally comprising 145 comments presented on the main stage, and 67 recorded in a semi-private setting room. Comment totals are shown in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1. Longview Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics**

<b>Type of Comment Submitted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Submitted</b>
MBTL Comment Cards	149
PPC Comment Cards	25
Unique Letters	50
Transcribed Verbal Comments	212
Presented from Main Stage	145
Recorded in Private Room	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>436</b>

### 3.1.2 Spokane

Approximately 500 people attended the public scoping meeting held in Spokane, and 157 comments were received. Of these, 61 were submitted as comment cards, comprising 55 MBTL Comment Cards and six PPC Comment Cards. Comments were also submitted through 10 unique letters collected at this meeting. Lastly, 86 verbal comments were submitted, including 67 comments presented on the main stage, and 19 recorded in a semi-private room. These comment totals are shown in Table 3-2.

**Table 3-2. Spokane Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics**

<b>Type of Comment Submitted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Submitted</b>
MBTL Comment Cards	55
PPC Comment Cards	6
Unique Letters	10
Transcribed Verbal Comments	86
Presented from Main Stage	67
Recorded in Private Room	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>

### 3.1.3 Pasco

The Pasco scoping meeting had approximately 260 attendees. A total of 140 comments were submitted at this meeting, including 39 received via MBTL Comment Forms. Comments were also submitted through six unique letters. Lastly, 95 comments were submitted verbally, including 78 that were presented on the main stage and 17 were recorded in a semi-private room. These comment totals are shown in Table 3-3.

**Table 3-3. Pasco Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics**

<b>Type of Comment Submitted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Submitted</b>
MBTL Comment Cards	39
Unique Letters	6
Transcribed Verbal Comments	95
Presented from Main Stage	78
Recorded in Private Room	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>

### 3.1.4 Clark County

The public scoping meeting held in Clark County yielded approximately 1,000 attendees. Comments received from this public scoping meeting totaled 382. Comment submissions included 152 comment cards, including 120 MBTL Comment Cards, 13 PPC Comment Cards, and 19 SC Comment Cards. Comment submissions also included 33 unique letters. Lastly, 197 verbal comments were submitted, including 150 comments presented on the main stage, and 47 recorded in a semi-private room by a court reporter. Comment totals for this meeting are exhibited in Table 3-4.

**Table 3-4. Clark County Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics**

Type of Comment Submitted	Number of Comments Submitted
MBTL Comment Cards	120
PPC Comment Cards	13
SC Comment Cards	19
Unique Letters	33
Transcribed Verbal Comments	197
Presented from Main Stage	150
Recorded in Private Room	47
Total	382

### 3.1.5 Tacoma

Approximately 900 people attended the public scoping meeting held in Tacoma. A total of 219 comments were received, of which 109 were submitted as comment cards and 13 were submitted as unique letters. Comment cards included 97 MBTL Comment Cards and 12 PPC Comment Cards. Lastly, 97 comments were given verbally at this meeting, including 66 comments presented on the main stage, and 31 recorded in a semi-private room. These comment totals are shown in Table 3-5.

**Table 3-5. Tacoma Scoping Meeting Comment Statistics**

Type of Comment Submitted	Number of Comments Submitted
MBTL Comment Cards	97
PPC Comment Cards	12
Unique Letters	13
Transcribed Verbal Comments	97
Presented from Main Stage	66
Recorded in Private Room	31
Total	219

## 3.2 Agency and Tribal Scoping Meetings

In June 2013, the Corps invited other federal agencies as well as local tribes to be cooperating agencies for the MBTL NEPA EIS process. **Appendix D** provides letters sent to these agencies and tribal nations.

### 3.3 Online Web Form, Email, and Postal Mail Comments

In addition to those comments obtained at public scoping meetings, over 214,000 comments were submitted by individuals, agencies, and organizations via email, U.S. Mail, and an online web form offered through the EIS website. Table 3-6 provides the totals of each of these comment submission types.

**Table 3-6. Web Form, Email, and U.S. Mail Comment Statistics**

Type of Comment Submitted	Number of Comments Submitted
U.S Mail	18,769
Email	194,807
Web Form	576
Total	214,152

A majority of these submissions (over 210,000) contained mass mailing or form letter comments from various interest groups that expressed support or disapproval of the MBTL proposal. A breakdown of these comments is provided in Section 3.3, *Mass Mailing*. The remaining submissions contained 943 unique comment letters; 820 from individuals, and 123 from agencies and organizations. These comments, along with a representative copy of each form letter, have been posted on the EIS website, and a list of agencies and organizations is provided in Chapter 4, *Agencies, Tribal, and Elected Official Comments*.

### 3.4 Mass Mailing Comments

Over 210,000 comments received were submitted through 63 organized mass mailing or form letter campaigns. These campaigns were submitted as either individual letters or signed petitions via U.S. Mail, the EIS web form, or most commonly through email. A large portion of the paper-mailed form letters were sent through CREDO Action, a social change organization involved in activism and partnered with the nonprofit organization, 350.org. Additional mass mailing campaigns (both paper and electronic) were submitted by other organized interest groups including Power Past Coal, Sierra Club, Earth Ministry, Northern Plains Resource Council, Citizens of the State of Montana, ForceChange.com, FRIENDS of the San Juans, Friends of Earth, and Waterkeeper Alliance. Table 3-7 provides the mass mailing comment totals.

**Table 3-7. Mass Mailing Comment Statistics**

Type of Comment Submitted	Number of Comments Submitted
U.S. Mail-CREDO Letters	12,346
U.S. Mail-Other Form Letters	6,354
Emails/Web Forms-Form Letters	193,864
Total	212,564

## Agency, Tribal, and Elected Official Comments

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Of the 215,486 comment letters received during the 90-day scoping comment period, 123 letters were received from federal and state agencies, state- and locally elected officials, local agencies/organizations, and Native American tribes. This chapter provides a list of these commenters.

### 4.1 Federal Agency Comments

Five comment letters were received from federal agencies.

- National Marine Fisheries Service
- National Park Service
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### 4.2 Tribal Comments

Ten comment letters were submitted by the following local Native American tribes.

- Coeur D'Alene Tribe
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (submitted two letters)
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Upper Columbia United Tribes
- Yakama Nation

### 4.3 State Agency and State-Elected Official Comments

A total of 13 comment letters were received from the following state agencies and state-elected officials.

- Attorney General for the State of Montana and the State of North Dakota, Rob McKenna
- Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Washington Public Ports Association
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Legislature, Representative Joe Schmick
- Washington State Legislature, Representative Paul Harris
- Washington State Legislature, Representatives and Senators from Districts 23, 24, 27, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 43, 46
- Washington State Legislature, Representatives Larry Haler and Brad Klippert
- Washington State Representative, 18th District
- Washington State Senate, Senator Tom Sheldon
- Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

## 4.4 Local Agency and Locally Elected Official Comments

A total of 28 comment letters were received from the following local agencies and locally elected officials.

- Bonneville Power Administration
- City of Camas, Washington
- City of Cheney, Washington
- City of Eugene, Oregon
- City of Lacey, Washington
- City of Livingston, Montana
- City of Longview, Washington (submitted two letters)
- City of Missoula, Montana
- City of Mosier, Oregon
- City of Olympia, Washington
- City of Sandpoint, Idaho
- City of the Dalles, Oregon
- City of Vancouver, Washington
- City of Washougal, Washington

- Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue
- Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
- Gallatin City-County Board of Health
- Hood River City Council
- King County Executive
- Metropolitan King County Council
- Olympic Region Clean Air Agency
- Port of Longview
- San Juan County Council
- Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency
- Thurston County Commissioner, Sandra Romero
- Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce (submitted two letters)

## 4.5 Other Agency/Organization Comments

A total of 67 comment letters were submitted by other agency/organizations not listed above. These agencies/organizations are listed below.

- Association of Washington Business (submitted two letters)
- Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (submitted two letters)
- Center for Salish Community Strategies
- Columbia River Gorge Commission (submitted two letters)
- Columbia River Pilots
- Columbia Riverkeeper
- Cottonwood Environmental Law Center
- Earth Ministry (submitted two letters)
- Earthjustice
- Eastside Audubon Society
- Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
- Friends of Grays Harbor
- Friends of Grays Harbor, Friends of the San Juans, and Friends of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuges
- Friends of the San Juans (submitted six letters)
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- Futurewise

- Gonzaga University Environmental Law Clinic
- Idaho Conservation League
- Leadership Alliance Against Coal
- League of Women Voters of Bellingham/Whatcom County (submitted three letters)
- League of Women Voters of Washington
- Mazamas
- National Association of Manufacturers
- National Mining Association
- Native Plant Society of Oregon
- Northern Pacific Resource Council–Bozeman Hearing
- Northern Pacific Resource Council–Missoula Hearing
- Northern Plains Resource Council and Western Organization of Resource Councils
- Northwest Environmental Defense Center
- Northwest Mining Association (submitted two letters)
- Oregon Interfaith Power and Light, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility (submitted three letters)
- Oregon Rural Action
- Our Children’s Trust
- Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ
- Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
- Pacific Rainforest Wildlife Guardians
- Puget Soundkeeper Alliance
- Salem Sierra Club Beyond Coal
- San Juans Alliance (submitted two letters)
- Shalom Church
- Sierra Club
- Spokane Riverkeeper
- The Lands Council
- United Transportation Union/SMART
- Vancouver’s Downtown Association
- Voters Taking Action on Climate Change
- Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee
- Washington State Catholic Conference

- Waterkeeper Alliance
- Western Organization of Resource Councils
- Whidbey Environmental Action Network

## **4.6 Agency/Organization Comments Addressed to the Corps**

In addition to several individuals, the following agencies/organizations addressed their comment letters to the Corps only:

- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- Earth Ministry
- Longview Switching Company
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service
- U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## **5.1 Introduction**

Between August 16, 2013 and November 18, 2013, the Co-Lead Agencies received over 215,400 scoping comments for the Proposed Action.

The Co-Lead Agencies' NEPA and SEPA contractor, ICF International, was responsible for collecting and summarizing all scoping comments. ICF's process for analyzing public comments builds upon its commercial web-based CommentWorks® software product. As a first step, ICF collected the comments from the Co-Lead Agencies, the Proposed Action's email address, web form, public comment transcripts, scoping meeting comment forms, and paper mail submissions. All comments were then imported into CommentWorks® for analysis. The Co-Lead Agencies and ICF staff developed a hierarchical coding structure to include key issues identified for the EIS scoping summary report. ICF staff then analyzed the agency and organization comment letters, identified comment excerpts ("bracketing"), and used the coding structure to associate each excerpt to the issue(s) to which it applies ("coding"). ICF staff then distilled the content from the verbatim excerpt quotes into the detailed comment summaries that are included in this document. The comment summaries that follow are organized by issue topic areas, as indicated in the table of contents.

This summary report is not intended to be an exhaustive discussion of all unique comments received. Rather, it attempts to capture common themes discussed by commenters and highlight particular issues detailed in the agency, organization, and public comments.

## **5.2 Comments Addressed to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Although the majority of comments received during the public scoping period were addressed to all three Co-Lead Agencies, approximately 30 individual commenters addressed their concerns specifically to the Corps. These comments were either heard at public scoping meetings or submitted during the public comment period. In addition to a few expressions of general support and opposition to the Proposed Action, and a statement that the Applicant has not provided sufficient need for the project, the majority of commenters discussed concerns related to air quality, water quality, land use and recreation, tribes, transportation, socioeconomics, cumulative effects, and the NEPA process. The details of these comments are summarized below.

### **5.2.1 Air Quality**

Some comments expressed general concern for the effect that the Proposed Action could have on air quality and associated impacts on human health and the environment. A few commenters suggested that the EIS evaluate the potential impacts associated with increased rail traffic on communities along the proposed route. One commenter requested that the EIS evaluate the impact that the

Proposed Action would have on the Highlands neighborhood in Longview, Washington, which is adjacent to the rail corridor.

Some comments discussed concerns related to air depositions and diesel emissions resulting from the transport and storage of coal from the proposed terminal. Commenters expressed general concern over the increase in both air and water pollution caused by fugitive coal dust particulates released from rail cars. One of these commenters suggested that the EIS consider mitigation to reduce coal dust that is released from rail cars during transportation. One commenter stated that the coal dust contains harmful carcinogens such as arsenic and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

## **5.2.2 Water Quality**

Some commenters expressed general concern for the effect that the Proposed Action could have on water quality including groundwater and surface water. One commenter requested that the permit application for the Proposed Action be denied because it does not meet requirements under Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. The same commenter expressed concern over the potential for contaminants from coal piles to leach into water. Another commenter requested that the EIS examine the impacts on wetlands near the project site and impacts on any area near the Columbia River that may be affected.

## **5.2.3 Terrestrial and Aquatic Resources**

A few commenters expressed general concern for the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and degradation of habitat as it related to the Proposed Action. One commenter discussed the issue of invasive species and the impacts that rail traffic would have on the introduction or increase in infestations. This commenter suggested that mitigation measures to minimize the impact of invasive species be considered. A few commenters expressed concern for the effect that coal dust may have on salmon that reside in the Columbia River. One commenter suggested that pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, a formal consultation of the impacts on federally protected fish species be conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## **5.2.4 Land Use, Shoreline, Visual Resources, and Recreation**

Some commenters discussed their concern for the impacts associated with rail traffic on public lands, specifically the lands of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Another commenter expressed concern for the effects pollution could have on the Oregon and Washington shorelines. A few commenters expressed concern for the potential impact noise and rail traffic could have on recreational experiences in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

## **5.2.5 Tribes**

One commenter recommended that the Corps consult with tribes that have expressed interest in the Proposed Action and its potential impacts on fisheries, salmon, and cultural resources.

## 5.2.6 Transportation

Some commenters expressed concern related to increased rail and vessel traffic caused by the Proposed Action. Some commenters expressed general concern for the increase in traffic congestion at grade crossings, increase in the probability of wildfires, and adverse impacts on communities and the environment caused by increased rail traffic. One commenter suggested that the increased rail traffic could directly and indirectly affect historic properties, including the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Other commenters discussed the adverse impacts of an increase in vessel transport on the Columbia River. A few commenters expressed concern regarding the impact that diesel pollution from tankers and vessel spills could have on aquatic life.

## 5.2.7 Socioeconomics

Some commenters expressed concern regarding the potential socioeconomic impacts associated with the Proposed Action. One commenter suggested that the Proposed Action would have a beneficial impact on the local economy by creating jobs. Others provided examples of adverse effects on the local economy. For example, a commenter suggested that the noise and pollution from the rail traffic would affect the property values in the Longview area, as well as affect access to local business. One commenter expressed concern for the impact that the Proposed Action may have on the health, economic, and social well-being of the Highlands neighborhood in Longview. Another commenter discussed the potential effects on the progression of other infrastructure and energy projects and suggested that a programmatic EIS would be “unnecessary and inconsistent” with NEPA requirements.

## 5.2.8 Cumulative Effects

Some comments were received regarding the Proposed Action’s cumulative effects. Some of these commenters expressed general concern for the worldwide impacts of increased climate change caused by fossil fuel use and exports. Further, a few commenters expressed general concern regarding the increase in climate change impacts caused by coal burning in Asia. A few of these commenters encouraged the use of alternative fuel sources. One commenter suggested that an analysis of the life cycle of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Proposed Action be conducted.

## 5.2.9 NEPA Process

A few commenters provided comments on the overall NEPA process as it relates to the Proposed Action. One commenter suggested that the Corps issue a programmatic EIS. Another commenter suggested that if a programmatic review of export projects that transports products to foreign countries was imposed, agencies would be required to conduct NEPA reviews of all U.S. trade activities with foreign countries.

## 5.3 Applicant’s Stated Purpose and Need

Approximately 900 commenters discussed the Applicant’s purpose and need statement for the Proposed Action. Nearly all comments on this issue stemmed from a form letter campaign

expressing that the Proposed Action should be broadened to look at economic development and environmental needs not only for the local area and region, but to consider global climate as well.

Other commenters suggested that the purpose and need statement be modified to include a public interest component. Another commenter cited court cases to express concern that the purpose and need of the Proposed Action was limited in scope and, therefore, the Proposed Action would not be able to identify a reasonable range of alternatives. One commenter stated that the Applicant's purpose and need statement is only a description of the Proposed Action and does not describe a purpose for the Proposed Action beyond use of the existing facility site. The commenter went on to state that the Applicant failed to discuss why the Proposed Action would solve any issues or problems.

Some commenters expressed concern over the long-term viability of coal, sustainability of the facility, its economic viability and existing port capacity. For example, one commenter stated that other coal export facilities that have been built in California and Oregon were never fully used due to shifting coal demands.

Some commenters expressed general concern over the future demand for coal; others expressed their opposition to promoting the use of coal, while suggesting the emergence of alternative energy sources. Some commenters suggested that globally, the use of coal is declining and the terminal would not be used as frequently as anticipated. In particular, a few commenters suggested that China is currently investing in infrastructure that would increase the availability of natural gas, which would likely displace demand for coal. Another commenter postulated that the demand for coal in the United States has fallen due to increasing environmental control costs associated with coal combustion and suggested that coal does not provide an appealing return on investment. The commenter continued by requesting the EIS analyze the extent to which coal market trends are being followed in the proposed export markets, including trends to replace coal with natural gas or renewable energy. However, another commenter felt that adequately assessing how markets would react to United States coal exports would be difficult and any attempt to do so would be speculative. One commenter stated that the sale of coal and other natural resources would attract investment to areas of the country that produces coal, like Montana and North Dakota.

## 5.4 Issues of Concern

### 5.4.1 Geology and Soils

Approximately 60 commenters discussed concerns related to soils and geologic hazards. Several commenters expressed concern for potential soil contamination due to coal dust deposition during coal extraction, transport and/or storage. One commenter recommended that the analysis to evaluate potential geologic hazards follow the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) methodology outlined in the comment, especially if expansion of rail lines over state-managed lands was to occur and further suggested collaboration with DNR when evaluating short-term impacts, long-term impacts, and mitigation measures related to soil, soil contamination, and cumulative hazardous material buildup. One commenter stated that the Proposed Action site was on a federal list for necessary clean-up and asked if the proposed coal terminal would add to the existing onsite pollution. Additionally, one commenter requested for the EIS to include the effects of wind events to determine the potential range of contamination and include the potential of mercury

contamination from coal dust. Conversely, several commenters stated that coal should not be considered toxic, and referred to soil sample studies conducted for previous coal terminals that determined existing natural soil contained more toxins than coal.

Other concerns raised by commenters related to suggestions that the EIS consider impacts associated with ground disturbance due to vibration of trains and its effects on buildings disrupting households and businesses; risks of slope instability and landslides during the mining of coal; dredging spoils and how contaminants, if found, would be properly disposed; erosion from overpasses and underpasses that could be implemented to mitigate train traffic; and contamination risks associated with coal bulk carriers and the proposed terminal in an event of an earthquake or tsunami; and potential of liquefaction at the proposed site. Another commenter asked how much grading and filling the Proposed Action would involve, and if land would be filled to a higher level of surrounding land.

## 5.4.2 Air Quality

Approximately 179,400 commenters provided comments relating to air quality. Nearly all comments derived from 23 form letter campaigns, 14 of which expressed general concern for air quality without providing additional information to explain their concern. Another four form letters expressed concern about air impacts resulting from the Proposed Action's diesel emissions. Three form letter campaigns expressed specific concerns about air quality impacts on the Columbia River Gorge (due to rail traffic emissions) and San Juan Islands (due to vessel emissions). One of these form letter campaigns stated that communities in Montana should not have to bear financial costs associated with adverse impacts on Montana's air quality. One form letter stated that coal mining has significant impacts on air, and another suggested that high air pollution standards are need for pollution caused by coal. Conversely, one form letter proclaimed that due to the conservative nature of emissions rates and ability to manage dust-generating activities, impacts on local air quality as a result of the Proposed Action are likely to be insignificant. Another form letter suggested the Proposed Action would result in a beneficial impact on air quality due to workers traveling less distance with implementation of the proposed facility.

In addition to the form letter campaigns, a number of commenters discussed concerns related to the geographic scope of the analysis of air quality impacts. Numerous commenters requested that the EIS consider air quality analysis areas beyond the proposed terminal site, including areas where potential effects could occur as a result from mining activities, rail transportation, handling at the export facility, and shipping traffic. A few commenters stated that coal export through the Pacific Northwest could potentially affect air quality in areas with Class I air designations. One commenter suggested that the EIS include all National Park Service units within 50 kilometers of the rail lines and shipping channels and all units within 100 kilometers of the terminals. One commenter requested specifically that impacts of train traffic be considered within 0.5 mile of the train. One commenter requested that impacts of train traffic be analyzed within 7 miles of railroad tracks.

A few commenters expressed concern for the air quality in certain geographic locations. A number of commenters requested that the EIS consider impacts on air quality from increased train traffic in communities in the State of Washington or along the full length of the rail line that the trains would traverse, the Columbia River Gorge, and in national wildlife refuges in Alaska and Washington State. Further, one commenter requested that the EIS consider the air quality impacts from additional trains through Spokane County. A commenter questioned what the air quality impacts would be at the Bozeman rail yard, which they stated would experience increased activity as trains are attached

to helper engines for transit over the Bozeman pass. Another commenter suggested that the Proposed Action evaluate impacts that additional train activity would have at the BNSF Railway Company's (BNSF) rail yard in Spokane County. Another commenter stated that the scope of the EIS should be broadened, in part, because of the potential impacts from long-range transportation of air pollutants. A commenter stated that the Proposed Action would result in impacts on visibility in the region and in particular, the Columbia River Gorge.

Comments were provided linking the geographic scope to a consideration of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). One commenter stated that there are numerous areas designated for nonattainment and maintenance for criteria pollutants that trains would emit along the rail lines. Another commenter remarked that Spokane County is designated as a maintenance area for particulate matter 10 (PM10) and carbon monoxide and requested that the EIS include a conformity evaluation to determine if the Proposed Action would comply with the General Conformity Regulations.

Some comments were received regarding emissions from train traffic and locomotives. Numerous commenters stated that coal trains would require the combustion of diesel fuel resulting in emissions of air pollutants and carcinogens. Some of these commenters requested that the EIS include an analysis of impacts from increased diesel emissions and air pollution from locomotives. A commenter remarked that coal trains may require twice the number of engines than a typical freight train and suggested that the EIS needs to quantify the amount of diesel emissions from the total number of engines. Some commenters requested that the EIS include measures to mitigate the impacts of diesel exhaust. A commenter recommended that all locomotives associated with the Proposed Action be required to meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Tier 3 or 4 emissions standards. Another commenter suggested that the use of diesel-fueled locomotives would contribute to criteria and hazardous air pollutant emissions into the Longview airshed, consuming the capacity of air pollution in the airshed. This commenter suggested that the EIS assess options to reduce air pollutants from coal transportation including diesel engines and diesel fuel. One commenter advocated using natural gas as a cleaner fuel for the trains to reduce harmful emissions.

A number of commenters stated that the exhaust from increased vehicle idle time at blocked railroad crossings would result in air quality impacts. Some of these commenters requested that increased idling times be analyzed in the EIS. Two of these commenters suggested that the EIS should include measures to mitigate the air quality impacts from increased idle time.

A few commenters suggested that the EIS consider emissions resulting from shipping vessels. A couple of commenters requested that the EIS include measures to minimize air impacts from shipping activities and one commenter suggested that binding mechanisms are necessary to ensure the use of the best available control technology to minimize emissions ships in transit and at berth. Another commenter requested that the EIS include an evaluation of the diesel emissions associated with marine vessels as well as the towboats and other support vessels within the North American Emissions Control Area. The commenter stated that the Co-Lead Agencies should evaluate ozone in the air quality impact analysis, including the combustion of the exported coal and the ozone precursors emitted by ships such as nitrogen oxides and requested that the analysis consider the type of fuels being used and the efficiency of the vehicles.

A number of comments identified concerns about other emissions sources. One commenter requested that the EIS include a list of potential export commodities that contains hazardous materials and the air quality impacts resulting from fugitive emissions from each commodity be

evaluated. A commenter suggested that fugitive coal dust fallout from transport and storage of coal at the proposed terminal site has the potential to contaminate raw materials and products used in papermaking operations. One commenter stated that there is a risk of fires or spontaneous combustion associated with coal handling, shipment, and storage and asked that the risk of fires and associated impacts on air quality be considered in the EIS. One commenter stated that wildfires caused by increased train traffic would lead to air pollution. Another commenter requested that the EIS analyze impacts on visibility from the fugitive emissions of the proposed uncovered storage site.

Several comments pertained to one or more specific pollutants. One commenter asked that the air quality analysis include impacts and pollution from nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, sulfuric acid mist, heavy metals, and coal dust. A number of commenters called out the pollutant diesel particulate matter (DPM) specifically and suggested that it be analyzed in the EIS.

A number of comments concerned the methods to be used in the air quality analysis. One commenter suggested a cost-benefit analysis to analyze train traffic impacts on air quality. Another commenter suggested that air modelling tools, such as AERMOD be used, but stated that comparing modeled impacts on NAAQS is not appropriate for a NEPA or SEPA analysis. The commenter stated that the NAAQS is not a level of pollution below which people are not harmed, but rather it is a policy tool to implement the Clean Air Act. The commenter suggested that air modelling be conducted and use “realistic” assumptions and inputs, a number of which were provided as examples. Another commenter requested that dispersion modeling be used in the EIS to assess impacts from DPM on receptors in Spokane County. A couple of commenters remarked that the EIS should analyze the Proposed Action’s consistency with the *Columbia River Gorge Air Study and Strategy* (Oregon Department of Environmental Quality 2011), which the commenters stated identifies as a goal for continued improvement of visibility in the Gorge. A commenter suggested that the Proposed Action should model visibility impacts on the Gorge and the cumulative impacts on visibility from other coal facilities in the region. A couple of commenters specifically requested that the EIS analyze the cumulative impacts on air quality resulting from the Proposed Action, as well as other coal export terminals.

#### 5.4.2.1 Air Deposition

Approximately 30,400 commenters provided comments related to the issue of air deposition. Most comments came from 10 form letter campaigns, four of which expressed general concern for impacts on air, water, soil, human health, and/or property values due to the exposure to coal dust. Two form letters stated concern regarding uncovered trains and resulting impacts of coal dust in the Columbia River Gorge and Columbia River. Other form letters discussed the need to study the toxicity of coal dust, the need for high standards for coal pollution, and concerns that the Proposed Action would directly affect communities in Montana, Wyoming, and the West Coast. Another form letter inquired about the impacts on Chinook salmon as a result of fugitive dust from coal processing, transport, runoff from dust-control water that is applied to coal piles, removal of Columbia River water to control fugitive dust, and use of dust suppressants. Another form letter suggested that previous environmental studies on suppressing coal dust during transport be incorporated into the EIS.

In addition to form letter comments, multiple commenters described their overall concern regarding coal dust impacts on water quality, aquatic life, and human health. A couple of commenters stated that coal dust has significant effects on plant function. Several comments were received that pertained to the scope of resources and geographic area that could be affected by coal dust.

Commenters concluded that the following would be negatively affected by coal dust: farmlands, forests, lakes, streams, and rivers in Thurston County, Washington; regional visibility; equipment, businesses, and/or economic activity; nearby soils; and agricultural production. One commenter requested that coal dust impacts be analyzed in the context of the local airshed in Longview. The commenter also stated that coal dust could be washed into Longview's stormwater system and concluded that this could affect the ability of the city to meet state and federal stormwater standards. A few commenters expressed concern that coal dust from the Proposed Action would have impacts on specific areas such as The Dalles, Gallatin County in Montana, Washington State, and the Columbia River Gorge. Another commenter stated that it has been documented that coal dust is already being deposited in the lands and waters of the Yakama Nation. Another commenter requested that the EIS consider the potential effects the coal dust may have on the electrical substation near the export facility. A commenter requested that the impacts of coal dust be considered in National Forest System lands through which the trains would travel. A commenter singled out McAlister Springs Nisqually Basin and stated that coal dust impacts of these resources should be studied. Other commenters stated that increases in coal dust along all proposed rail routes should be analyzed as a reasonably foreseeable impact.

Human health effects from coal dust were one of the issues about which most commenters expressed concern. A number of commenters called for a detailed study of health impacts from coal dust. One commenter specifically requested that an exposure risk assessment include evaluation of exposure through inhalation of coal dust particles near the rail lines and export terminal, as well as ingestion and consumption of food from contaminated areas. Another commenter specifically called for a health impact assessment (HIA) and provided specific questions that could be addressed. One commenter requested that the EIS include a full description of the chemical composition of the coal that would be transported.

Several comments were submitted that pertained to other potential risks presented or exacerbated by coal dust deposition. A number of commenters stated that or questioned whether accumulations of coal dust carry a risk of spontaneous combustion and fire. One commenter expressed concern that coal dust from the terminal may affect equipment and services provided by the nearby electrical substation. Several commenters suggested that accumulations on train tracks can cause derailments. One commenter stated that the Surface Transportation Board has conducted studies that identified coal dust as a "pernicious ballast foulant". A commenter suggested that the EIS study the increased costs of rail infrastructure maintenance required because of increased coal dust.

Numerous comments referred to a study conducted by BNSF that quantified the amount of coal dust a car may lose in transit. A couple of commenters included another study from 1993 that they stated showed a loss of up to 1 pound of coal dust per car, per mile. One commenter stated that, based on these studies, the Proposed Action would result in over 32 million pounds of coal in the Columbia River Gorge each year.

Some comments described a number of purported methods by which coal dust could be transported. For example, one commenter stated that coal dust would accumulate in the cloud bank in the Columbia Basin and would later be transported as snow or rain around the region. Another commenter concluded that coal dust is capable of spreading over large areas of land and water through wind and stormwater runoff. A commenter recommended that the uniquely high winds in the Columbia Gorge should be considered in the analysis. One commenter requested that the EIS include modeling of fugitive emissions based on regional weather patterns.

Although the majority of the comments on air depositions pertained to coal dust emitted by rail cars during transit, a number of comments were received regarding other sources of coal dust. Several commenters stated that coal dust could spread during loading/unloading activities or from the uncovered coal piles at the terminal. One commenter stated that coal dust would be generated during ship transport. Another commenter requested that the EIS evaluate the impacts from coal dust originating at the mine sites. One commenter stated that the EIS must consider the impacts of all three pending coal export terminals.

In addition to coal dust, a number of comments were submitted that pertained to the deposition of other materials. Several commenters stated that air pollutants, including particulate and mercury emissions, could be transported from the combustion site back to North America or requested that the EIS include an analysis of air pollution in North America that could result from combustion in Asia and blow back of pollution such as mercury. A couple of commenters questioned what kind of air regulations and standards would be in effect where the coal is combusted. One commenter remarked that mercury deposition should be specifically examined. Another commenter recommended that the EIS consider the deposition of nitrogen and sulfur compound deposition from diesel exhaust.

The issue of surfactants was raised by commenters in a few different contexts. Several commenters questioned the efficacy of surfactants in controlling coal dust and/or requested that it be discussed in the EIS. A couple of commenters stated that there are no binding regulations requiring shippers to use surfactants and concluded that many coal companies are not using surfactants. One commenter stated that BNSF has stated its intent to construct a surfactant re-topping station on the route between the Powder River Basin and the Port of Metro Vancouver (Canada). A couple of commenters concluded that the EIS should also disclose and compare the consequences of not using surfactants. A number of commenters claimed that the surfactants contain chemicals (both known and unknown) whose effects on the environment are not well understood or otherwise requested that the EIS include an analysis of impacts of surfactants on the environment.

Several commenters requested or suggested mitigation measures for the EIS. One commenter recommended that the EIS include mitigation measures specific to coal dust inhalation and ingestion while others requested that more general (or unspecified) measures be included to mitigate coal dust impacts. Some commenters stated that the Proposed Action should be required to pay for all mitigation measures of coal dust. A commenter requested that stormwater management and dust suppression methods be included in the EIS. Several commenters stated that the EIS should consider or evaluate the requirement that coal cars are covered or other control technologies be used.

One commenter stated that the Proposed Action would result in 132 to 144 tons of annual dust releases. Another commenter asked that the EIS include a comparison of coal dust releases between the proposed terminal and the Coyote Island terminal, which they stated would include, covered or closed storage and loading. A commenter requested that the EIS process include air monitoring at locations near the proposed facility to determine baseline levels that can be used to determine the impacts of coal dust after export operations begin.

### **5.4.3 Energy/Greenhouse Gases**

Approximately 900 commenters discussed issues related to GHGs. A majority of these comments stemmed from six form letter campaigns, three of which expressed general concern for an increase in GHGs as a result of the Proposed Action, while another inquired about the economic cost to the

shellfish industry in Washington State due to global climate impacts as a result in increased GHGs. Conversely, three form letters stated GHG emissions from the Proposed Action would not affect the atmosphere, whereas one letter suggested that the degree of emissions required to cause a global impact is vastly greater than the emissions that could be attributed to the Proposed Action. Two letters stated that the proposed terminal would not increase the use of coal globally and, therefore, the net gain in GHG emissions would be insignificant.

In addition to the form letter campaigns, one commenter stated that coal export projects are inconsistent with the Copenhagen Climate Accord, to which the United States is a signatory. Another commenter stated that the scoping decision for the Gateway Pacific Bulk Terminal (GPT) Project should not be considered for the Proposed Action. Specifically, the commenter stated that the conclusions of the GPT scoping decisions are flawed because there is no evidence that the export of coal across the MBTL project docks would create new or additional GHG emissions or that any additional GHG emissions would adversely affect the environment. The commenter also stated that the scoping decisions for GPT could violate “the presumption against extraterritoriality,” which the commenter stated, “prohibits agencies from applying a statute to regulate conduct beyond Borders”.

Sources of GHG emissions were identified in the comments. One commenter cited a recent study, which according to the commenter, concluded that spontaneous combustion of coal stocks constitute substantial sources of GHGs. Some commenters requested that the EIS include an evaluation of GHGs associated with idling motor vehicles waiting for coal trains at at-grade crossings in Washington State. A few commenters stated that the vessels trips would result in the release of GHGs both while vessels are docked and underway. One of these commenters suggested that the EIS include measures to reduce the Proposed Action’s carbon footprint. The commenter also stated that the EIS should include an analysis of fossil fuels used by trains travelling over state-managed lands.

A couple of commenters stated that the scope of the analysis would be unnecessarily and/or inappropriately broad if it includes the carbon footprint of the coal from its point of origin to combustion at its destination. Another commenter stated that because there are too many variables that affect the calculation of GHGs, an analysis of GHGs associated with the transportation and use of a product outside the state of Washington would be speculative and costly.

One commenter stated that a 2012 Executive Order of the Washington Governor directs the Office of the Governor and cabinet agencies to advocate for GHG reductions at a global, national, and regional level.

Approximately 140 commenters discussed energy resources. Several commenters advised against the Proposed Action and suggested considering alternate, cleaner energy sources. One commenter stated that because Washington is a leader in clean energy, it should not be approving the storage of a fossil fuel. Other commenters suggested that the Proposed Action promotes dependence on fossil fuels and that it would “undermine the leadership of Oregon and the Northwest”. Another commenter expressed the need for the EIS to analyze potential impacts (direct and indirect) along the rail corridor including impacts on the Washougal Oaks Natural Area and suggested the use of the forest biomass initiative as a reference to study the impacts on renewable energy. A few commenters supported the use of coal and the Proposed Action, suggesting that coal supports the domestic economy.

A common theme throughout these comments was the desire to reduce the use of fossil-fuel energy or to switch to alternative renewable energy, often referred to as “clean energy,” and many commenters indicated the Proposed Action would hinder the development of clean energy sources.

Several commenters stated that implementation of the Proposed Action would contradict the Pacific Northwest's goals and reputation associated with renewable energy development and innovative environmental policies.

#### 5.4.4 Water Resources

Numerous comments addressed the topic of water resources including concern for water quality, groundwater, drinking water, surface water, and floodplains. Approximately 145,500 commenters addressed concerns regarding the Proposed Action's impacts on water quality. Nearly all comments stemmed from 21 form letter campaigns, 12 of which expressed general concern for water quality without providing additional information to explain their concern. Three form letters expressed general concern for water impacts resulting from the Proposed Action's coal dust and/or other pollution leaching into waterways. One form letter focused on water quality concerns regarding rail construction in the Columbia River Gorge, and another demanded that communities in Montana not bear financial costs associated with adverse effects on Montana's water quality. Another form letter suggested that high standards need to be set for water pollution by coal. Conversely, one form letter discussed how coal is not toxic in water, and pollution is only released through burning. This form letter added that the EIS would not need to study water quality impacts related to coal due to previous coal operations at the site.

In addition to the form letter campaigns, some commenters listed water quality among a list of other issues of concern (e.g., air quality, public health, fish and wildlife) without providing additional information to explain their concern. Some commenters requested that the EIS consider several aspects of water quality impacts (e.g., increased sediment loads, possible spills, coal dust impacts, mercury deposition, and groundwater impact). According to one commenter, BNSF is currently a defendant in a Clean Water Act citizen suit regarding coal dust discharge. Another commenter requested that the Proposed Action's permit application be denied for not meeting the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines under the Clean Water Act. Other general comments specific to water quality concerns include coal dust, construction impacts, and other topics of concern.

- **Coal dust.** Several commenters stated concerns regarding waterways being exposed to coal dust lost from uncovered trains during transportation. One commenter suggested coal dust could also end up in a cloud bank and return to rivers and streams in rain or snow. The same commenter stated concern for toxic contaminants released at coal ash disposal sites, and further commented that coal dust could spread not just from transportation, but from uncovered coal piles sitting at the terminal. A few commenters suggested that errant coal dust could potentially be washed into the local stormwater systems. One commenter stated that the provisions in the construction and industrial stormwater general permit are not adequate for controlling toxic runoff from the proposed facility into sensitive and impaired water bodies.
- **Construction impacts.** One commenter suggested that the Corps examine water quality impacts resulting from construction of the Proposed Action, including in-water, above-water, and on-land construction. The commenter suggested it would be important to examine increased turbidity, resuspension of contaminants, and discharge of pollutants from the Proposed Action's construction activities and stormwater runoff.
- **Other topics of concern.** Other topics of concern related to water quality included rainwater leaching, impacts on local wildlife refuges, acid deposition, runoff, and impacts from active and abandoned mine sites. A rainwater leaching study was suggested by a commenter to estimate

the volume of daily rainwater leaching emissions resulting from the Proposed Action. Another commenter requested that the EIS scope include an impact assessment on the water environment in Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges and National Wildlife Refuges in Washington. One commenter suggested for the EIS analysis to consider acid deposition into waterways (locally and globally) from train and vessel engines. This commenter mentioned the analysis for the Port of Morrow Proposed Action, which they stated showed nitrogen deposition in to the Columbia River much higher than the ecological screening level. One commenter listed a potential impact as "polluting the waters with slurry runoff." One commenter stated that contact with water in active and abandoned mines could release mercury into the environment. Additional unique comments on the issues of ground water, surface water, floodplains, and wetlands are highlighted in the summary sections below.

#### **5.4.4.1 Groundwater**

Approximately 60 commenters addressed concerns related to groundwater impacts of the Proposed Action. Of these comments, approximately 20 comments stemmed from a form letter campaign that stated that high standards need to be set for coal pollution on aquifers. Of the unique comments submitted, several commenters stated their concerns of pollutants associated with the Proposed Action seeping or leaching into groundwater. A couple of commenters requested for the EIS to analyze potential groundwater contamination from coal dust or other "toxic" materials from project facilities and the rail line. Several commenters expressed concern regarding the increased frequency of refueling due to more rail traffic by the Proposed Action contaminating the Spokane Valley and Rathdrum prairie aquifers. Other commenters expressed concern for groundwater contamination in the event of a train derailment and stormwater runoff. The scope of groundwater analysis was requested by another commenter to encompass 7 miles of the railroad tracks. One commenter expressed concern about the effect on local water tables from water being drawn to irrigate coal piles (to prevent combustion), and another asked for the EIS to investigate any wells and the water table on or near the proposed site, and how they would be protected from contamination.

#### **5.4.4.2 Drinking Water**

A few commenters addressed the issue of potential impacts on local drinking water supplies. For example, one commenter stated that the City of Olympia has long been concerned about the potential of a hazardous spill along the BNSF rail line and the spill's effects on the city's primary drinking water source, McAllister Springs. Another commenter requested the EIS analyze the impacts of rainwater runoff from the proposed coal piles to Longview's potable well water. Another commenter stated the Proposed Action's rail lines would be located directly above the Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer, Spokane Valley's sole source of drinking water, and requested the maximum protection for this aquifer. Another commenter expressed concern for mercury deposition in Lake Whatcom, a potable water source for Whatcom County, as a result of pollution drifting back to the United States from coal combustion in Asia.

#### **5.4.4.3 Surface Water**

Approximately 41,600 commenters addressed concerns regarding the Proposed Action's potential impacts on surface water (e.g., rivers, streams, lakes). Most of these comments derived from five form letter campaigns, one of which expressed general concern for surface water impacts without providing additional information to explain their concern. Other form letter campaigns relayed

concerns about the Proposed Action's uncovered trains introducing pollutants into the Columbia River, surface water quality concerns in the Columbia River Gorge, and water pollution in the San Juan Islands from increased shipping traffic. One form letter requested the EIS consider the pollution of waterways from mining, transporting, and shipping of coal.

In addition to the form letter submissions, one commenter suggested that the EIS analyze "how much right-of-way onto state-owned aquatic lands is estimated to be required to accommodate the increase in trains". Some commenters listed impacts on surface water among a list of other issues of concern (e.g., air quality, public health, fish and wildlife) without providing additional information to explain their concern. However, most commenters addressed more specific surface water quality concerns, the most common related to potential impacts from coal dust, train and vessel transportation, and potential spills. These and other specific surface water concerns are summarized below.

- **Coal dust.** Many commenters expressed concern regarding waterways being exposed to coal dust lost from uncovered trains during transportation via rail and/or shipping. Specific waterways mentioned include the Columbia River, Spokane River, Lake Pend Oreille, and other multiple water bodies along the route from the Powder River Basin. One commenter also asked for the potential water quality hazards of surfactant to be studied in the EIS, and another requested for the acidity of the Columbia River to be studied due to exposure of engine exhaust and cargo dust. Another concern of commenters involved polluted stormwater runoff entering natural water systems, and several added that this issue could be exacerbated due to the high amount of rain received in the region. One commenter suggested that errant coal dust could potentially be washed into the local stormwater systems, affecting the ability to meet state and federal stormwater standards. Conversely, a couple commenters discussed how coal is not toxic in water, and added that the EIS should not be required to study surface water quality impacts related to coal.
- **Train and vessel routes.** Several commenters requested that the EIS examine potential surface water impacts along the Proposed Action's train and vessel routes. A common concern included the impacts related to the increase in train and vessel traffic by the Proposed Action resulting in a greater risk of contaminants entering surrounding water bodies.
- **Potential spills.** Several commenters expressed concern about potential train derailments and the subsequent release of hazardous material spills into waterways along the rail line. This included potential spills along the rail line, at the proposed facility, and along proposed vessel routes. Most of these commenters specifically remarked on the potential impact on public drinking water supplies due to a spill. Specifically, the drinking water supplies at McAllister Springs, the Nisqually Basin, and the community of Longview were discussed.
- **Other topics of concern.** Other topics of concern related to surface water included comments on construction, the water used to spray coal piles, impacts on wildlife refuges and national parks, impacts from coal mining, and the scope of analysis. One commenter stated that construction of the Proposed Action would alter water quality conditions, and another commenter asked the EIS to study the adverse impacts on surface water cause by the runoff from spraying down coal trains and coal piles. Another commenter requested the scope of surface water analysis to encompass 7 miles of the railroad tracks. One commenter asked for the potential of overwater structures to affect water flow or other natural hydrological functions to be examined. Another commenter stated that additional coal mining is harmful to water resources.

#### **5.4.4.4 Floodplains**

Two commenters provided comments on floodplains. One commenter stated that impacts of the Proposed Action would include loss of floodplain lands in the Columbia River Estuary. Another commenter asked how the Proposed Action would affect and mitigate for the increased loss of the Columbia River Estuary floodplain lands.

#### **5.4.5 Wetlands**

Approximately 900 commenters addressed concerns related to the Proposed Action's potential impacts on wetlands. A majority of these comments stemmed from a form letter campaign that expressed concern about the Proposed Action's rail lines crossing many tributaries and wetlands, and the potential impacts on these water resources during construction of new tracks. Many other commenters discussed potential direct impacts and/or permanent loss of wetlands from implementation and operation of the Proposed Action. This includes impacts on be considered on coastal wetlands and wetlands at the project site, in the immediate project vicinity, and along the coal train routes. Some commenters also expressed concern about coal being introduced to wetland areas by wind-blown dust and possible leaching of stationary piles. One commenter added that coal contains multiple toxins capable of changing biological activity, which would be harmful to wetlands. Another commenter expressed concern that the Proposed Action could negate the wetland restoration efforts on the lower Columbia River. Polluted stormwater runoff infiltrating wetland areas was another topic of concern for a few commenters, and it was also suggested for the EIS to analyze how state resources, including wetlands within and outside directly affected areas would be protected". One commenter stated the Corps would be in violation of the Clean Water Act by engaging in illegal clearing of federally protected wetlands.

#### **5.4.6 Terrestrial Wildlife and Vegetation**

Approximately 31,400 expressed general concerns for the terrestrial environment and degradation of habitat as it related to the Proposed Action. Nearly all comments stemmed from six form letter campaigns, four of which expressed general concern regarding the potential impact the Proposed Action would have on Columbia River Gorge ecosystems while another form letter campaign called for more stringent coal pollution standards to better protect terrestrial habitats. Another form letter campaign called for the protection of the Columbia River Gorge and its terrestrial resources. Similarly, a few commenters stated their concern for the affect that coal and coal dust would have on terrestrial ecosystems. Another commenter expressed a need for the EIS to assess the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the Washington State National Wildlife Refuge, the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, and other Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges. One commenter requested that the EIS analyze sensitive ecosystems and potential impacts on DNR Natural Resource Conservation Areas and Natural Area Preserves along the potential rail corridors. Additional comments on the issues of terrestrial wildlife and vegetation are highlighted in the summary sections below.

##### **5.4.6.1 Terrestrial Wildlife**

Approximately 17,200 commenters discussed concerns related to terrestrial wildlife. Nearly all comments were from two form letter campaigns that expressed general concern over the potential toxins added to the atmosphere by coal transport (e.g., mercury, carbon dioxide, and heavy metals)

explaining that these toxins could be harmful to wildlife. Similarly, a commenter expressed concern for impacts on wildlife that may occur from particulate and mercury emissions that are “transported back” to North America. A couple of commenters stated that local wildlife is currently exhibiting elevated levels of mercury in their blood.

In addition, some commenters requested that evaluations and/or assessments related to terrestrial wildlife and their habitat be included in the scope of the EIS. Many of these commenters suggested assessments including evaluation of potential impacts of the proposed coal trains on various wildlife habitats, evaluation of Glacier National Park, Alaska National Wildlife Refuges, Washington National Wildlife Refuges, and on wildlife life stages and migration patterns. One commenter concluded that the EIS scope should be extended to include the Powder River Basin.

Some commenters expressed concern about potential impacts on terrestrial threatened and endangered species, including waterfowl and migratory birds. One commenter noted that to thoroughly assess impacts on threatened species and critical habitat (including migration routes and spawning areas), the EIS analysis would need to expand its scope to include areas proposed for the transport of coal, including along rail lines and shipping routes. A few commenters urged agency consultation and coordination pursuant to the ESA regarding impacts of the Proposed Action on federally listed terrestrial species and their habitat.

A few commenters expressed concern about the general effects of the Proposed Action, coal mining, coal dust, coal spillage, and train operations on wildlife and their habitat. One commenter stated that increased vessel traffic would result in the increased introduction of nonnative terrestrial species, such as rodents, to the Alaska Maritime Refuge, threatening the native sea bird colonies.

#### **5.4.6.2 Terrestrial Vegetation**

Approximately 20 commenters, including a form letter campaign, asked for evaluations and/or assessments related to terrestrial vegetation to be included in the scope of the EIS. One commenter suggested vegetation communities, specifically in the Columbia River Gorge, be considered, and suggested that the impact of potential train-related fires on local vegetation and rare plants growing along the train routes be assessed. One commenter requested that plant communities listed as threatened or endangered on state-managed lands along the entire potential rail corridor be evaluated. One commenter was concerned with the potential for new introductions and increased spread of invasive species as a result of the proposed rail operations, and requested that the EIS identify potential mitigation measures that may be used to minimize impacts from invasive species that might occur in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. One commenter suggested the EIS analyze potential impacts on urban forests along the rail corridors. This would include permanent removal of urban forests and fragmented forests. The commenter also expressed concern regarding the potential for fine particulates to coat the surface areas of leaves leading to a reduction in plant photosynthesis and respiration. This same commenter urged agency coordination regarding resource mapping methods.

One commenter was concerned about potential impacts on vegetation from the breakdown of surfactants sprayed on coal to minimize dust, and suggested that the EIS provide a determination of the chemical components of the surfactant and their potential impacts on vegetation. Another commenter stated that coal dust can alter floral and lichen communities.

## 5.4.7 Aquatic Resources

Approximately 178,100 commenters expressed general concern for the aquatic environment and degradation of habitat as it relates to the Proposed Action. Nearly all general comments were from 15 form letter campaigns, 12 of which expressed general concern for the damage of aquatic ecosystems and/or fishing areas on the Columbia River caused by the Proposed Action. Two form letter campaigns suggested that the Proposed Action would cause damage to aquatic ecosystems because it would expand strip-mining in Wyoming and Montana.

Other commenters expressed concern related to the effect of in-water construction and railroad operation on certain water bodies. A couple of these commenters requested that an analysis of impacts during construction occur, including the impacts of sea-floor disturbance and increased turbidity related to in-water construction. A few commenters concerned with the construction and operation of the terminal stated that the construction and existence of the wharf and trestle would have shading impacts, which would affect estuary ecology. A couple of commenters expressed their concern about the effects of increased marine traffic on marine habitats, including the introduction of invasive species. A few commenters stated that studies have shown that large ships can cause significant disturbances in the system, such as causing wake stranding of outmigrating smolts, bank erosion, and disturbance of nearshore habitats. Other comments specific to marine and/or vessel traffic are addressed in detail in Section 5.15.2, *Vessel Traffic*. Some commenters expressed their concern for coal dust and coal spillage related impacts on the aquatic environment and requested that the EIS analyze this topic. One commenter asked that the EIS determine the chemical properties of Powder River Basin coal and its chemical effects on fresh water and saltwater resources and habitat. One commenter stated that spills and the burning of coal could result in increased levels of mercury damaging aquatic resources and lead to habitat loss.

One commenter expressed a need for the EIS to assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the Washington State National Wildlife Refuge, the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, and other Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges.

One commenter stated that the BNSF railroad runs adjacent to Bear Creek and the Middle Fork Flathead River, and crosses several streams in Glacier National Park, and that they are concerned about impacts on aquatic life from coal dust, diesel emissions, and potential oil spills and train derailments. This same commenter was also concerned about potential impacts on Puget Sound and the Columbia River, and requested that the EIS analyze the effects of the export terminals and increased ship traffic on aquatic habitats and wildlife in Puget Sound and the Columbia River.

Other commenters asked that the EIS include certain analyses in the scope of the document to determine potential impacts on aquatic resources and river ecosystems. One commenter suggested that the EIS include an analysis of impacts on marine and aquatic resources beginning in the area of coal mining, extending along the rail corridor to the terminal, at the terminal, extending along the vessel corridor to Asia, and ending with the burning of coal in Asia. One commenter stated that the EIS should evaluate and present all mitigation measures necessary to ensure minimization of impacts on fish and wildlife species and habitats. This same commenter requested the evaluation of impacts on the aquatic environment from coal dust emissions from uncovered rail cars, and the inclusion of associated identified mitigation measures. Other commenters expressed the need for the EIS to address impacts on aquatic species along the transportation route, and to analyze whether rail corridors may need to expand onto aquatic lands to accommodate the Proposed Action.

One commenter asked that the EIS include a study of estuarine habitat, determine a baseline bathymetry value, and conduct a hydrodynamic modeling study of the effects of the Proposed Action on the estuary, including effects on water flow, velocity, and sediment transport. This commenter further stated that the study should include various water quality parameters, such as temperature. One commenter was concerned how riverine vegetation and habitat for freshwater invertebrates would be affected by changes in wave energy, sediment transport, or substrate.

A few commenters expressed concern for the economic loss to the seafood industry, as a result of the loss of marine species due to ocean acidification from GHGs that are produced from increased coal transport and burning.

Additional unique comments on the issues of aquatic wildlife and vegetation are highlighted in the summary sections below.

#### **5.4.7.1 Aquatic Wildlife**

Approximately 29,300 commenters expressed general concern for impacts on aquatic wildlife resulting from the Proposed Action. Nearly all of these comments stemmed from three form letter campaigns, two of which expressed general concern over mercury added to the atmosphere by coal transport and the impact on seafood, endangered salmon runs and orcas. A few commenters urged agency consultation and coordination regarding marine mammals and threatened and endangered species during the EIS process. One form letter campaign expressed general concern for the impact that increased rail construction would have on aquatic wildlife.

In addition, some commenters expressed concern regarding adverse impacts on aquatic wildlife that would be caused by increased vessel traffic. The commenters suggested that the wakes and waves caused by increased vessel traffic could potentially lead to shoreline erosion and adverse impacts on aquatic wildlife. One commenter suggested that the transportation of products from the proposed terminal site was an interrelated action and would require analysis under Section 7 of the ESA. The commenter requested that information on shipping corridors include routes to the edge of the Exclusive Economic Zone. The commenter also remarked that the EIS should take into account increased vessel collisions with marine mammals and sea turtles. One commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies consider seasonal restrictions of vessel traffic and tug operations to minimize impacts on spawning and migration behavior of fish.

A few commenters stated concern for marine mammals such as sea lions and seals in the Columbia River, and requested an analysis of the impacts on them from the coal export facility and increased vessel traffic. A few commenters conveyed concerns regarding the Southern Resident Killer Whale or orca. Some of these commenters called for the EIS to assess a variety of potential impacts on the Columbia River itself and on the forage fish, Chinook salmon, and orcas, including project construction, coal dust, oil and/or coal spills, ocean acidification, and increased mercury pollution. One commenter expressed concern for potential harmful effects on orcas from loss of forage fish habitat at the proposed terminal site. One commenter expressed concern for the potential impacts on ducks and geese that forage for vegetation along the Columbia River that may be contaminated by coal dust.

One commenter requested a study of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on marine mammals from noise emanating from vessels along the routes to and from Asia, and another commenter requested a study of the impact of noise and vibration during construction on the native aquatic species of the Columbia River. One commenter called for toxicity studies that assessed the

level of discharged heavy metals and polycyclic hydrocarbons on freshwater and marine life at all stages of life. A couple of commenters requested that baseline conditions be established and monitoring of relevant conditions to determine if mitigation measures are working effectively. One commenter voiced concern for the potential impact of sea level rise on marine mammal haul out, nesting, and foraging sites.

One commenter urged the Co-Lead Agencies to identify, quantify, and evaluate potential impacts on fish and commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries from vessel operations. This same commenter requested a study to analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative climate change, ocean acidification, and mercury emissions impacts on fish and to commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries.

Numerous commenters expressed general concern for impacts on, and resulting loss of, fish and shellfish populations, both wild and farmed, resulting from the Proposed Action. A few commenters expressed concern about effects on regional fishing, including tribal fishing and Native American treaty rights. A few commenters made general comments related to the Proposed Action negatively affecting fish and shellfish populations.

A few commenters expressed concern regarding construction and operational impacts resulting from the Proposed Action, including dredging and lighting during normally dark hours and shading during normally light hours. Others expressed concern for the general effects resulting from operation of the Proposed Action—i.e., coal mining, coal dust, coal spillage, and train operations—on fish and shellfish and their associated habitat.

Several commenters requested evaluations or assessments related to fish and shellfish species to be included in the scope of the EIS. One of the commenters requested that the habitat evaluation extend from the terminal location upstream to, and along, the Columbia River and Cowlitz River. A couple of commenters requested an analysis of potential impacts on protected sensitive species including resident and anadromous fish species such as salmon, steelhead, lamprey, eulachon, and trout.

Several commenters expressed concern for toxic contaminants in fish and shellfish, such as mercury and selenium, and requested that the EIS address this issue. One commenter requested the evaluation of potential impacts on fish from nitrogen pollutants emitted by diesel engines, and acids formed by other diesel pollutants. Additionally, a couple commenters were concerned about potential impacts on fish and shellfish from the breakdown of surfactants sprayed on coal to minimize dust, and suggested that the EIS identify potential impacts of surfactants on fish and shellfish, including freshwater mussels at the terminal and along the rail route. A few commenters requested that the EIS investigate the potential magnitude of wake-stranding mortality.

One commenter discussed a food chain connection between birds and forage fish and requested that the EIS document the global effects of the Proposed Action on birds, fish, and other aquatic and marine life. A couple commenters noted a food-chain connection between Chinook salmon and orca whales, and requested that the EIS evaluate a large number of potential impacts on Chinook salmon. These same commenters requested consideration of the following mitigation measures related to Chinook salmon:

- Cease operations during the migration of Chinook salmon smolts.
- Cease operations when juvenile Chinook salmon are present.
- Cease operations when adult Chinook salmon are migrating.

One commenter expressed concern that construction and operation of the Proposed Action could affect portions of the Columbia River and its tributaries where listed threatened and endangered fish live, and requested that the EIS include information on the train routes and the anticipated number of water body crossings per day.

Numerous commenters stated that the potential for the introduction of invasive species through ballast water exchanges and hull fouling be evaluated in the EIS and mitigation measures are identified. One commenter specifically requested that management of ballast water exchanges be consistent with Washington State Ballast Water Management Act and interstate agreements on Columbia River ballast water management protocols. A couple of commenters were concerned about the potential impacts on fishing, crabbing and shellfish harvesting from invasive species introduced by vessels releasing ballast water.

One commenter expressed concern for noise impacts on fish and shellfish from additional large vessel traffic. Another commenter requested a study of the impact of noise, vibration, sedimentation, and turbidity during construction and operation of the Proposed Action on the native fish and shellfish species of the Columbia River.

One commenter expressed a need for the EIS to assess the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the Washington State National Wildlife Refuge, the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, and other Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges.

#### **5.4.7.2 Aquatic Vegetation**

Approximately 900 commenters provided comments specific to aquatic vegetation. Nearly all comments were from a form letter campaign that expressed concern over the expansion of rail capacity in the Columbia River Gorge to accommodate the Proposed Action, and the adverse impacts this construction would have on aquatic vegetation.

One commenter expressed concern for the amount of shading resulting from the overwater structure and moorage of vessels, and requested the identification of potential impacts of shading on riverine resources, including littoral vegetation, benthic habitats and riverine vegetation. This same commenter expressed concern for potential impacts on riverine vegetation as a result of dock construction, operations, and maintenance, and vessel operations, and urged agency coordination regarding methods for mapping aquatic vegetation resources.

A couple of commenters expressed the need for the EIS to identify, quantify, and evaluate all potential impacts of the Proposed Action on phytoplankton, zooplankton, aquatic plants and the marine food web, among other resources. One commenter provided background information on, and a description of aquatic vegetation found in, the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. A couple of commenters expressed concern for eel grass beds near Cherry Point and Columbia River and related effects from coal export.

Increased vessel traffic was suggested by some commenters to potentially cause environmental impacts due to vessel wakes and waves, which commenters stated could lead to adverse impacts on vegetation.

### 5.4.8 Noise and Vibration

Approximately 126,100 commenters discussed noise and vibration as it relates to the Proposed Action. Nearly all comments were from 15 form letter campaigns that opposed the Proposed Action because of general concern about increased noise and related disturbance to communities that could be caused by the Proposed Action. Other commenters expressed concern about the potential increased noise and vibration from rail traffic, rail operations, blowing of horns, and building damage from ground settling due to vibrations. Some commenters were concerned about surface and subsurface noise, including vessel noise. Other concerns related to noise included the increase in the number of coupling and decoupling trains in the rail yard resulting in noise pollution; negative impacts on communities due to noise; noise impacts of additional large vessels on threatened and endangered communities in the Columbia River; and construction, operation, and cumulative noise impacts caused by large vessels on marine mammal species including Chinook salmon, bird species, and the National Wildlife Refuges. Some commenters suggested that the increase in train trips and impacts from train horn noise should be studied in the EIS and adequate mitigation should be provided.

A couple of commenters that expressed opposition to increasing the number of trains along the existing freight corridor suggested that adverse effects resulting from chronic noise include impaired sleep, lower cognitive function, cardiovascular effects, and general adverse effects on quality of life. Some commenters suggested a study be conducted on noise impacts on sleep and related health concerns such as depression, high blood pressure, and cognitive impairment in children. In addition to providing several studies related to noise impacts on health, the commenter proposed an HIA be conducted, as well as a study to assess the potential impacts of coal train noise and hearing loss and related costs. Other commenters suggested that a study be conducted on existing noise levels and the cumulative noise impacts given the housing pattern, location of schools, and other community facilities. Another commenter suggested that a study be conducted on the health, economic, and social impacts on the Highlands community in Longview, Washington, which the commenter stated is alongside a corridor where 16 coal trains are scheduled to pass by.

Some commenters were in favor of establishing a Quiet Zone but raised concern about the costs involved in establishing a Quiet Zone within the community. One commenter suggested that the increase in rail traffic noise may negatively affect recreational experiences and suggested an evaluation and identification of mitigation measures to reduce such noise impacts.

Some commenters stated that their property has been damaged by vibrations occurring from an increased number of trains that pass by. Others expressed concern for marine life and the negative effect that train vibrations may have on animals and their habitat.

### 5.4.9 Land Use, Shoreline, Visual Resources and Recreation

Approximately 20 commenters provided comments of general concern for issues involving land use, shoreline, visual resources, and recreation. Additional comments on these specific topics are highlighted in the summary sections below.

### 5.4.9.1 Land Use

Approximately 60 commenters expressed concern regarding impacts on land use. A few commenters discussed the importance of the identification and inclusion of mitigation measures in the EIS for any potential impacts on land use. Other commenters expressed concern that the Proposed Action would encourage increased coal mining and affect land use after coal removal. Several commenters expressed concern and requested an analysis of rail lines, particulate emissions and coal dust impacts on residential and agricultural land use including vineyards, farmland, and ranches. One commenter stated that the Proposed Action is a reclamation project used to clean up the existing site and several commenters stated that the existing site is already located in a heavy industrial area. Other commenters requested that the EIS analyze impacts of coal dust, emissions, and increased noise from rail lines on residential land use in proximity of the rail lines. A few commenters were concerned about the use of eminent domain to procure privately owned ranches for rail development. Many commenters expressed concern that construction of the terminal, coal dust, corridor expansion, and rail lines associated with the Proposed Action would have impacts on nearby federal and state land use, natural resource conservation areas, national forests and parks, natural area preserves, and sensitive, threatened and endangered areas. Several commenters expressed concern that rail lines would pass through national forests and result in the bifurcation of federal, state, and publicly managed lands and requested an analysis on such areas. One commenter requested that a survey of sensitive environmental lands be performed. One commenter stated that a rail loop connected to the Proposed Action would overlap a Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) transmission tower and associated BPA properties. Some commenters discussed the effects of coal dust, vessel traffic and rail lines on the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area including its geographic and historical features. A couple of commenters stated the importance of federal compliance with the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan and the National Scenic Area Act and encouraged the proponent to utilize the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan to identify potential impacts on consider in the EIS.

### 5.4.9.2 Shoreline Use

Approximately 20 commenters expressed concern regarding shorelines adjacent to existing railroad lines and systems. Some commenters were concerned about cumulative impacts of sea level rise and effects on coastal areas and shorelines; others were concerned about potential effects on coastal areas due to potential shipping accidents from marine vessels. One commenter stated that an analysis of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges and shorelines due to climate change, ocean acidification, and mercury emissions be provided.

### 5.4.9.3 Recreation and Recreational Areas

Approximately 900 commenters expressed general concern regarding impacts on recreation and recreational areas. Nearly all comments stemmed from a form letter campaign, which expressed general concern regarding the potential impact the Proposed Action would have on tourism and recreational resources of the Columbia River Gorge. In addition to the form letter campaign, some commenters stated that coal dust, rail lines, rail traffic and vessel traffic may affect recreational activities and tourism at recreational and scenic areas, including but not limited to locations along the Columbia River and the Columbia River Gorge. A couple of commenters also expressed concern for the safety and health of visitors to national parks and recreational areas if there was a likelihood of an increase in rail traffic in the vicinity. A couple of commenters expressed support for the

Proposed Action and stated that there was no adverse effect on the recreational area and activities of Tongue River Reservoir Park, despite the park's close proximity to the Decker Montana Coal Mine.

#### **5.4.10 Tribes, including Indian Fishing and Fishing Treaty Rights**

Approximately 80 commenters addressed the issues of tribes, including Indian fishing and fishing treaty rights.

Some commenters, including a form letter campaign, expressed general concern about the effects of the Proposed Action on tribal treaty rights and resources including the ancestral use of land and burial grounds. Several commenters stated that "usual and accustomed" fishing areas and protected hunting areas would be affected by the Proposed Action. Another commenter remarked that the increased rail traffic associated with the Proposed Action would occur near or would otherwise affect traditional hunting and gathering areas. One commenter stated that the Proposed Action would be built in treaty-protected fishing areas of the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Nez Perce tribes specifically. A couple commenters expressed concern about the effects of the Proposed Action on fishing areas and farmland of the Nisqually and coastal Salish tribes. One commenter questioned how religious freedoms would be affected by the Proposed Action.

Comments were submitted that listed project components or activities that were perceived to cause an impact on tribal resources. One commenter stated that direct and adverse impacts would be caused by the loading facility, dock, increased train traffic, and Panamax ships. That commenter stated that tribal members are exposed to train collisions when crossing rail tracks to access fishing sites and suggested that the Proposed Action would increase the rate of fatalities to tribal members. The commenter urged the Co-Lead Agencies to study this concern in the EIS, and also recommended that the effects of fugitive coal dust on treaty rights be considered in the EIS. One commenter claimed that 17 Treaty Fishing Access Sites accessible through at-grade crossings located between the Bonneville and McNary dams would be affected. The commenter also stated that there are "In-Lieu" fishing sites (pursuant to P.L. 79-14) that already experience noticeable coal dust emissions. A number of commenters stated that chemicals in coal and coal dust are harmful to the fish in tribal fisheries, and one commenter concluded that mercury from coal combustion in Asia would end up in the fish that tribal members consume.

A few commenters requested that the EIS include an analysis of impacts on tribal fisheries and treaty resources. Commenters identified a number of species that they stated carry religious and cultural significance to one or more tribes including salmon, sturgeon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey. One commenter stated that acid deposition from diesel combustion may damage tribal fisheries. Another commenter stated that fish species that rear, hold, and migrate through the project area are subject to the Nez Perce Tribe's tribal treaty rights. A commenter also stated that tribal First Foods (not limited to fish) need to be considered.

A number of comments pertaining to the tribal consultation process were submitted. One commenter stated that they would not negotiate or agree to mitigation for any actions diminishing their treaty-reserved rights. A couple of commenters suggested that several tribes had expressed interest in the Proposed Action and requested government-to-government consultation. Another commenter stated that intergovernmental consultation is required by the Co-Lead Agencies. The commenter identified the 1989 Centennial Accord and concluded that it requires government-to-government consultation between the State of Washington and federally recognized tribes. A

commenter requested that the EIS address how the federal government would be fulfilling its responsibility to tribes if the Proposed Action was authorized.

One commenter stated that the Proposed Action would have significant and irreparable impacts on the Yakama people and their treaty-reserved rights and requested that the each of the Co-Lead Agencies deny Millennium’s application. Another commenter stated that the Proposed Action—which would run through the tribe’s territory—would be a “violation of the public trust and constitute the unwise stewardship of common resources”.

### 5.4.11 Cultural, Historic, and Archeological Resources

Approximately 900 commenters, including a form letter campaign, addressed the issues of cultural, historic, and archeological resources. A number of these commenters suggested that the EIS consider the specific impacts of air pollution from the Proposed Action on cultural and historic resources. One of these commenters stated that coal dust can cause soiling and darkening of historic properties and that acid deposition from diesel combustion and blasting from mining activities can damage historic properties. A number of commenters stated that the EIS should consider cultural impacts along the rail routes between the mines and the export terminal and a few commenters requested that the EIS consider the cultural impacts at the terminal site. However, one commenter stated that the Crow Indian Tribe has not had any complaints about adverse effects on the Crow Indian Reservation as a result of coal trains. Along with requesting that potential historic properties along the rail route be analyzed in the EIS, one commenter listed a historic site (Coffin Hills Site 45CW3) that they stated should be clearly identified and addressed in the EIS. A commenter stated that there are over 10,000 historic properties documented along the route with more yet to be identified, and another commenter stated that the EIS must include all communities that may have locally designated historic properties bisected or traversed by the rail routes in Washington. One commenter asked that the EIS evaluate impacts of the coal terminal on people who use the cultural resources. A number of commenters suggested that the EIS consider impacts on Traditional Cultural Properties including ancestral lands and tribal burial grounds. One commenter stated that the Pacific Lamprey has special cultural significance to Native American tribes and suggested that impacts from the terminal site be evaluated in the EIS.

A number of comments were submitted regarding the cultural properties of the Columbia River Gorge. One commenter suggested that the Management Plan for the Columbia River National Scenic Area would be helpful for identifying potential impacts to consider in the EIS. Other commenters identified a number of state and federally designated historic areas within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The commenters stated that there are “countless” cultural resources sites throughout the Gorge. The commenters also recommended that that the review pay greatest attention to the areas in the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and Fort Vancouver Historical Site, where the historic vistas and natural resources are intact.

One commenter suggested specific methods and models that could be used in the analysis, for example, MULTI-ASSESS and CULT-STRAT.

A number of comments regarding consultation were received. A couple of commenters concluded that the Corps must conduct Section 106 consultation with all affected tribes, which one commenter stated includes the Nisqually Tribe. One commenter remarked that the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that the lead agency determine and document the appropriate area of potential effects (APE) as part of Section 106 consultation. The commenter stated that the

APE must include the transport of coal by rail from its origin to the facility as well as through the lower Columbia River to Asia. Another commenter stated that they expect the APE would also include the proposed Morrow and Cherry Point terminals.

One commenter requested that the EIS identify all mitigation measures necessary to address impacts on cultural resources and require the terminal proponents to pay for and implement the mitigation. Another commenter urged the Co-Lead Agencies to deny Millennium's application due to the irreparable harm caused to the Yakama Nation's cultural resources.

## 5.4.12 Transportation

Numerous comments discussed transportation concerns as they relate to the Proposed Action. Approximately 960 commenters, including two form letter campaigns, expressed general concern regarding the potential environmental impacts associated with the transportation of coal. One commenter specifically requested that the transportation of coal be evaluated from the mine location to the point of consumption. Another commenter requested that the EIS evaluate the effects that the Proposed Action and other similar projects would have on the state's transportation system. Other comments provided on rail transportation and vessel transportation are summarized in the sections below.

### 5.4.12.1 Rail Transportation

Approximately 143,660 commenters specifically stated concern about issues relating to rail transportation. Nearly all of these comments stemmed from 27 form letter campaigns, of which 17 form letter campaigns, and numerous unique submissions included comments expressing general concern regarding impacts related to a potential increase in rail traffic from the Powder River Basin to the proposed bulk export terminals in the Pacific Northwest. Additional details of the comments are provided below.

- **Scope.** Many commenters remarked on the scope regarding rail transportation. One of the form letter campaigns requested that the scope of Ecology's train traffic analysis be consistent with that of other commodity export terminal projects. Another form letter campaign requested that the scope of the analysis include historic rates of rail traffic. One commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies prepare a Programmatic EIS that would cover the expected increase in rail transportation of coal from the Powder River Basin to all proposed export terminals. Some commenters requested that the EIS evaluate all potentially affected communities along the proposed rail route. More specifically, a commenter requested that the EIS include direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on freight mobility, rail capacity, and traffic throughout the Pacific Northwest. A few commenters requested that the Co-Lead Agencies identify alternatives that would minimize local and regional impacts associated with increased rail traffic. However, other commenters suggested that the EIS not include impacts on or resulting from the rail transportation system.
- **Delay at grade crossing.** Numerous commenters expressed concern regarding restricted vehicle and pedestrian mobility and access resulting from longer wait times at rail crossings and requested that impacts on mobility and access be analyzed in the EIS. Specifically, one commenter stated that increased rail traffic could result in interference with the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution of the United States by reducing access to Interstate 5 (I-5), Ocean Beach Highway, Highway 30, and Highway 101 due to delays that would be expected on

the Lewis and Clark Bridge. A couple of commenters suggested that the convergence of major BNSF and Union Pacific/Spokane International rail lines is currently creating a bottleneck for freight shipment through Spokane and affecting regional freight rail mobility. A few commenters remarked that increased rail traffic would affect residents of the Rattlesnake Valley in Missoula, Montana, which the commenters stated can only be accessed through one of two rail crossings. One commenter stressed the importance that access to the transmission station adjacent to the proposed terminal site not be blocked by trains waiting to enter or leave the site.

Numerous commenters requested that traffic and wait times at rail crossings due to increased rail traffic be included in the scope of the EIS. Other commenters specifically requested an analysis of traffic delays for highways and other major thoroughfares. Some of these commenters requested the Co-Lead Agencies include a safety impact analysis. Another commenter stated that long coal trains could simultaneously close all three at-grade crossings in Bozeman, Montana, and all four at-grade crossings in Belgrade, Montana. The commenter requested that impacts on residents' quality of life in these communities resulting from increased rail crossing closures be evaluated. One commenter urged the Co-Lead Agencies to evaluate the time it takes for an average coal train to pass through a rail crossing, the times of the day these closures are likely to occur, and potential impacts on surrounding traffic patterns.

One commenter suggested that many of these locations between Spokane, Washington and Longview, Washington already experience delays and may not be able to accommodate more rail traffic without mitigation measures. The commenter requested that the EIS analyze how the Washington State highways would be affected by the projected increase in rail traffic and identify any other rail routes being considered. A few commenters requested that the Co-Lead Agencies identify alternatives that would minimize local and regional impacts associated with increased rail traffic.

- **Vehicle and pedestrian safety.** Numerous commenters expressed concern that an increase in rail traffic would lead to increased frequency of train and vehicle and/or train and pedestrian accidents. One commenter requested the scope of the EIS include impacts on safety resulting from increases in rail traffic along the entire rail transportation corridor. One commenter requested to review proposals from the railroads to modify train speeds in cities and towns. Another commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies identify all unprotected rail crossings along the rail transportation routes and what entity is likely to pay for the construction of potential barriers. One commenter suggested the only way to adequately mitigate rail crossing closures would be to build overpasses, which the commenter stated should be costs borne by the project proponents and not individual municipalities or states.
- **Infrastructure improvement.** Numerous commenters remarked on potential infrastructure improvements that would be necessary to accommodate an increase in rail traffic. One commenter requested the Co-Lead Agencies analyze the investment necessary to maintain transportation infrastructure with increased rail traffic and identify potential sources of funding necessary for such improvements. One commenter expressed concern that state and local governments would bear the burden of infrastructure improvements resulting from increased rail traffic. Another commenter expressed concern regarding the ability of bridges to support the weight of heavy coal trains, citing an incident in which they stated a bridge collapsed under the weight of a coal train.

Numerous commenters requested that the EIS evaluate impacts on infrastructure projects such as the State Route (SR) 432 Rail Realignment and Highway Improvement project (SR 432

Project). One commenter suggested that the Proposed Action is the only major unit train related development in the area and that coal exports are the primary driver for improvements to the SR 432 corridor. The commenter suggested that since the SR 432 Project would facilitate the increased unit train capacity for the Proposed Action that the Corps evaluate impacts of the SR 432 Project as part of the EIS.

One commenter requested that the EIS analyze the location and design of bridges or culverts that would be replaced for any stream crossing and requested that all structures meet the fish passage and hydraulic code requirements of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The commenter continued by stating that the existing rail system is located adjacent to the Columbia River shoreline and other state-managed rivers and requested the EIS analyze how much of the right-of-way onto state-owned lands is estimated to be acquired to accommodate an increase in rail capacity.

- **Rail capacity.** A couple of commenters expressed concern regarding impacts associated with expanded rail capacity through the Columbia River Gorge. Some commenters stated that the current regional rail infrastructure does not have the capacity to accommodate an increase in rail traffic. Many commenters expressed concern regarding worsening bottlenecks and choke points along the rail routes. One commenter suggested the Co-Lead Agencies conduct an evaluation of future capacity constraints and rail system accessibility in Washington. The commenter recommended the EIS include detail about the rail operations and capital needs assessment by the BNSF railroad to address future bottlenecks and capacity constraints when the proposed terminal is operating at both State 1 and Stage 2 levels of operation. Another commenter suggested that rail operations in the region are currently operating below capacity. One commenter suggested that Co-Lead Agencies include increases of oil train traffic in the EIS.
- **Local planning.** One commenter suggested that local planning efforts in Spokane County would be uniquely affected by additional rail traffic. The commenter cited four local plans and studies that were written prior to consideration of significant rail traffic increases and suggested that both NEPA and SEPA required consideration of potential impacts on regional planning initiatives. One form letter campaign suggested that an increase in rail traffic would require the construction of additional overpasses and underpasses and the creation of Quiet Zones along all rail transportation routes. One commenter suggested that to establish Quiet Zones to lower rail-related noise impacts, communities must pay for additional infrastructure upgrades. The commenter requested these types of costs to communities along the rail route in Montana be included as part of the scope of the EIS.
- **Operational issues.** Numerous commenters requested that the EIS evaluate rail operations. One commenter requested that the EIS specify the average number of trains that would enter the proposed terminal site each day, the average length of each trains, and the rail transportation routes used in Washington. One commenter suggested that rail transportation of coal is an interrelated action and requires analysis under Section 7 of the ESA. In particular, the commenter requested that the EIS contain information on train routes and the anticipated number of crossings per day. One commenter requested a binding mechanism to ensure that the lowest-emitting locomotives are used for new coal trains and ensure that the best operational practices are used to minimize locomotive idling. The commenter requested that these locomotives meet EPA Tier 4 emissions standards. A few commenters suggested that the EIS analyze the efficacy of surfactants as a means to control coal dust as well as the potential impacts associated with the use of surfactants.

- Rail displacement issues.** Numerous commenters expressed concern that an increase in coal trains would lead to a displacement of other rail services including agricultural products and passenger rail. One commenter requested the Co-Lead Agencies include in the EIS, how the additional coal train traffic would affect Washington's plans to implement additional passenger rail service. The commenter requested that project proponents ensure that accessibility to the rail system to allow for future growth in other commodity shipments. Another commenter requested that impacts on Amtrak's ability to provide reliable service between Vancouver, British Columbia, Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon be evaluated and mitigation measures identified. One commenter requested that the EIS analyze impacts from increases in long-haul or intermodal trains on Washington's agriculture industries.
- Derailments.** Numerous commenters requested the Co-Lead Agencies analyze the risk and potential impacts of train derailments on the environment and communities along the rail transportation corridor. Several commenters expressed concern regarding potential cargo spills, including coal and hazardous materials, resulting from train derailments. Some commenters requested that an emergency environmental clean-up plan be developed in the event of a derailment. Other commenters specifically requested the analysis evaluate the risk of train derailment and cargo spills into the Columbia River. One commenter cited the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, which the commenter stated, mandates the requirement of Positive Train Control technology for high volume of trains carrying hazardous materials. The commenter stated that any needed infrastructure along the rail lines is a reasonable and foreseeable effect of the Proposed Action and urged the Co-Lead Agencies to include it in the scope of the EIS.

Numerous commenters were specifically concerned about the potential for derailments being exacerbated by the presence of coal dust deposition on the rail bed. One commenter expressed concern that train derailments would kill livestock and people along the rail transportation corridor. However, one commenter suggested that freight rail is a safe, clean, and reliable means of transportation.

- Wildfires.** Several commenters suggested that risks associated with rail-induced wildfire be included in the scope of study. Specifically, one commenter requested that all fire-prevention laws and rules of the state be adhered to during the facility construction. The commenter went on to request that all reasonable measures to prevent and minimize the start and spread of fires on forested areas be taken. The commenter also requested that the EIS analyze the potential increased risk of explosion and resulting wildfire from the additional train traffic through or adjacent to forest lands. One commenter informed the agencies that forest fires are particularly severe in the Columbia River Gorge due to heavy and persistent winds and suggested the coal companies be held liable for costs associated with rail-related wildfires. According to another commenter there have been 61 fires reported over the past ten years in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area that had started on or near the railroad tracks.
- Noxious weeds.** One commenter suggested that additional rail traffic would increase the spread of noxious weeds to the Columbia River Gorge.

#### 5.4.12.2 Other Transportation Concerns

Approximately 560 commenters stated transportation-related concerns not pertaining specifically to rail or vessel transportation. Nearly all comments stemmed from five form letter campaigns,

which provided general comments on the Proposed Action's potential impacts on road transportation.

One commenter provided background of the SR 432 Project. The commenter stated that review of the SR 432 Project under the purview of the EIS would be inappropriate and not serve public interest, primarily because the Proposed Action is not intended to support a single business or property along the SR 432 corridor and instead is intended to service the region. Another commenter requested the Co-Lead Agencies conduct a traffic impact analysis to disclose the Proposed Action's transportation construction impacts on the state highways systems. The commenter included particular metrics the analysis should contain. One commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies evaluate possible mitigation for the relocation of the coal transportation routes away from western Washington. Another commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies analyze the role transportation plays in the Proposed Action and the impact that other similar projects would have on transportation resources in the region. One commenter requested that shipping-related increases in water turbidity also be examined in the EIS. One commenter remarked that the EIS should address the impacts from increased rail traffic to the efficient movement of goods by trucks.

### 5.4.13 Vessel Traffic

Approximately 177,600 commenters discussed impacts resulting from increased vessel traffic. Nearly all of these comments stemmed from 17 form letter campaigns, of which expressed general concerns regarding increased vessel traffic and the potential for increased accidents and spills. One of these form letter campaigns suggested the analysis include potential beneficial impacts from increased vessel traffic.

Numerous unique submissions also stated general concerns regarding increases in maritime vessel transportation. In particular, commenters suggested that the Co-Lead Agencies analyze the cumulative impacts associated with all new proposed traffic in the Columbia River and along vessel transportation corridors. Some commenters voiced concern regarding the increase in vessel traffic in the Columbia River and questioned the river's capacity to accommodate such levels of traffic. However, other commenters stated that due to the Columbia River Channel Improvement Project, which the commenter stated deepened the navigation channel; the Columbia River has the capacity to accommodate increased vessel traffic. One commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies evaluate increases in vessel traffic for those directly associated with the Proposed Action and only from the mouth of the Columbia River to the terminal itself. The commenter stated that the exact vessel routes and destinations are unknown once they leave the mouth of the Columbia River, and any attempt to analyze impacts would be highly speculative. The commenter also stated that increases in vessel traffic on the Columbia River are likely to occur whether the Proposed Action is licensed or not and, therefore, stated that increases in vessel traffic should be analyzed as part of the No Action Alternative.

- **Spills.** Many commenters expressed concern and asked that the EIS include the risk of fuel and/or cargo spills into the Columbia River. One commenter requested a risk assessment be conducted to cover potential collisions and groundings.

A couple of commenters requested that an adequate oil spill response plan be put in place. The commenters requested that the EIS include steps that would be required to implement such a plan, what the associated costs would be, and what entity would be responsible to pay for any

necessary infrastructure upgrades. Other commenters expressed particular concern regarding potential accidents and spills that could affect Alaska’s National Wildlife Refuge as ships sailed along the North Pacific route to Asia.

- **Shipping operations and safety.** Numerous commenters requested the EIS analyze the risk of vessel collisions with other ships. A couple of commenters requested that risks associated with potential accidents during refueling be considered. One commenter expressed concern regarding potential vessel accidents around the Aleutian Islands and requested that the Co-Lead Agencies specify the entire route or routes the vessels would take to and from Asia during all times of the year. Additionally, commenters expressed concern regarding the size of the vessels that would access the terminal, the amount of fuel the vessels carry, and the amount of room the vessels need to maneuver safely.

A few commenters requested that the Co-Lead Agencies identify the type and number of vessels that would travel from the proposed terminal during the initial operation and full operation stages. Commenters expressed concern that foreign ships traversing through the Columbia River to access the proposed terminal would comply with the same standard of maintenance and operations as U.S. vessels. A couple of commenters requested that the Co-Lead Agencies identify applicable laws and regulations governing safety in international waters, the entities that would be responsible for ensuring compliance, and the parties that would be held liable for noncompliance. The commenters also requested that the owners of the vessels servicing the proposed terminal be identified including which vessels would be sailing under the right of “innocent passage.” They also requested that the Co-Lead Agencies identify and evaluate emergency protocols in the event of an accident.

One commenter requested that the EIS analyze how sewage and gray water would be handled at the proposed terminal. The commenter also requested that the EIS analyze the potential for vessel transportation to interfere with adjacent industrial operations and impacts on other vessels transiting through the lower Columbia River if vessels needed to moor temporarily at the proposed terminal site.

- **Traffic and navigation.** Numerous commenters expressed concern about increased vessel traffic congestion. One commenter suggested that the EIS analyze multiple alternatives for reducing vessel congestion. One commenter suggested that an increase in vessel traffic on the Columbia River would impede on tribal fishing rights. Another commenter postulated that increased traffic would cause adverse impacts on navigation along the Columbia River resulting from ships that are forced to drop anchor in the river, while waiting to dock at the proposed terminal.

One commenter suggested that the EIS include a detailed vessel traffic analysis and assessment of potential traffic management needs. The study, the commenter suggested, should use modeling techniques that rely on the most recent U.S. Coast Guard vessel tracking system data for the Columbia River. Numerous commenters suggested that an increase in vessel traffic would pose safety and navigational risks to shippers due to what the commenters describe as difficult conditions that exist at the Columbia River bar. One commenter remarked that the vessels servicing the port are expected to be Panamax bulk carriers. The commenter suggested that vessels of this type routinely sail through river systems and would pose no additional risk to navigational safety. A couple of commenters expressed concern that the Proposed Action would affect other commodity vessels using the Columbia River.

## 5.4.14 Social Impacts and Socioeconomics

Approximately 133,500 commenters stated concern regarding potential socioeconomic impacts associated with the Proposed Action. Nearly all comments stemmed from 28 form letter campaigns, of which eight suggested the Proposed Action would have beneficial impacts on the local economy, while five suggested that benefits of the Proposed Action include job creation and increased tax revenue. Seventeen form letter campaigns, however, suggested the Proposed Action would have overall negative impacts on the economy. Nine of these form letter campaigns suggested that increased rail traffic would harm existing businesses and slow regional commerce. Three form letter campaigns specifically addressed the potential for the Proposed Action to have negative impacts on property values. Another form letter campaign inquired about potential impacts on grain producers from rail displacement resulting from increased rail traffic. One form letter campaign expressed concern that the Proposed Action would encourage investments in coal-fired power plants in Asia, which would crowd out potential clean energy investments in the region. Another form letter campaign suggested that the financial burdens of the Proposed Action would fall upon the public.

Numerous unique submissions also expressed general concern that the Proposed Action would generate negative socioeconomic impacts. Several other commenters, however, suggested that the Proposed Action would generate positive socioeconomic impacts.

Many commenters expressed concern for potential negative impacts on local businesses and residents from delays at train crossings, including lost work time, lost productivity, less visitors to the area, and social isolation. A few commenters asked that the EIS evaluate mitigating the delay to a level of nonsignificance and to include the ongoing funding of emergency responder alternative means for access to emergency situations. Additional commenters expressed concern for impacts on businesses resulting from the increase in noise from added train horns sounding. One commenter stated that vibrations from additional trains could cause “ground settling and potentially building damage”, and thereby “disrupt households and businesses”. Several commenters stated that local communities would bear the expense of the costs of rail crossing improvements and installations, and that this issue should be addressed in the economics analysis.

Numerous commenters stated that local and national economies would benefit from the economic boost if the Proposed Action were to move forward. Several commenters stated that the Proposed Action would create many job opportunities, including “family-wage” jobs in construction, waterfront, maritime, and railroad trades, and apprenticeship positions that would prepare the next generation of union trade craft workers. Some of these commenters stated that the Proposed Action would encourage the development of other natural resources in the United States, which would assist in bringing the country out of economic depression. A few commenters expressed support for the Proposed Action and how the new infrastructure would assist in competing in a global economy. Another commenter stated that an increase in U.S. coal exports would draw in revenue and investments from abroad. Conversely, a commenter stated that using the BNSF rail system is more costly than Chinese and Eurasian rail networks, and expressed concern that the expense would hinder the U.S. coal industry’s ability to compete in the global market place.

A few commenters expressed a concern that the increase in project-related jobs (construction, railroad, and export terminal jobs) would not offset the jobs at risk from the Proposed Action (tourism, small business, farming, and fishing).

Multiple commenters requested that the EIS assess and evaluate a wide variety of components of the local, regional, national, and global economies, to varying degrees of detail. A few commenters requested a thorough economic analysis, which would approximate a net gain or loss to the economy. A few commenters requested an economics analysis to evaluate the impacts on air quality and the “health system’s ability to deal with our citizen’s increase risks for serious medical problems as a result of the degradation of air quality.” One commenter requested that the EIS evaluate the health benefits from increased economic development and employment.

A few commenters stated that coal companies are receiving subsidies at the expense of their economy, and that the Proposed Action includes spending public tax money for a private project. A couple of commenters asked that the EIS include an economics analysis to determine what entity would be responsible for the cost of mitigation, and what government resources could be used to lessen the impacts of the Proposed Action

A few commenters voiced concern for impacts on natural resources that would affect businesses related to recreation and tourism, including the Alaskan and Washington National Wildlife Refuges. Several commenters were concerned that the Proposed Action would negatively affect the availability of fish for those who rely on fishing for “sustenance, employment, recreation, or cultural heritage.” A few commenters provided background information related to ecotourism in the region. In particular, the commenters expressed concern regarding what impact a potential depletion of the regional fisheries would have on the recreational fishing tourism industry

One commenter remarked that a 2010 Columbia River Channel Improvement Project was conducted to make the Columbia River navigation channel deeper and, therefore, more marketable and accessible to move more tonnage and produce new business and jobs.

Several commenters expressed concern that existing freight commodities and passenger rail service would be pushed out by the increase in coal trains. One commenter stated that the EIS should analyze impacts on passenger rail use if freight traffic were to increase. One commenter expressed that the proposed additional train volume exceeds “the capacity of the current system,” and another commenter urged the Co-Lead Agencies to review available regional planning efforts, while evaluating system capacity.

A few commenters expressed general concern that the Proposed Action would adversely affect property values locally and statewide, and requested that the EIS address this issue. A few commenters stated that property values decrease near coal terminals and railroads, and owners would no longer be able to sell their homes due to increased air pollution, noise, and traffic barriers. One commenter requested the EIS conduct an analysis on whether a “coal town reputation” could adversely affect businesses, property values, recruiting employees, and attracting tourism.

One commenter stated that the Proposed Action would increase diesel prices, and, therefore, increases the price of food. Another commenter requested that the EIS address the potential effect that coal export would have on domestic energy pricing and security.

#### **5.4.14.1 Environmental Justice**

Approximately 40 commenters stated concern pertaining to environmental justice. A few commenters expressed general concern regarding environmental justice issues and inquired how the Co-Lead Agencies would ensure that tribes and other minority groups would not be disproportionately affected by the Proposed Action.

Numerous submissions expressed concern that the Proposed Action would result in adverse health outcomes for low-income neighborhoods close to the proposed terminal site. A couple commenters specifically requested that the EIS analysis include performing health impact assessments that examine how the mining, transportation, and combustion of coal from the Proposed Action could increase the disproportionate “environmental burdens and health inequities” experienced at-risk communities. A few commenters requested that the EIS focus on at-risk populations such as children and the elderly and to consider “cumulative and disproportionate impacts” on communities that are already exposed to high levels of air and water pollution.

Several commenters expressed concern for specific residential communities. One commenter remarked that the Highlands neighborhood in the City of Longview is “a low income neighborhood with relatively high residential density” and “a disproportionately high share of the environmental impacts, including health, economic, and social effects will have the potential to affect this neighborhood”. This commenter requested that the EIS include a comprehensive HIA for the Highland neighborhood. One commenter also expressed concern for the health of the low-income neighborhoods of the Highlands and Mint Farm. One commenter suggested that communities adversely affected, like Mosier, Oregon, be compensated for the health, environmental, and economic impacts resulting from coal exports and rail traffic. One commenter remarked that because some of the lowest income communities in Missoula, Montana exist along the railroad track, the Co-Lead Agencies should consider and plan mitigation for those communities along the full course of the route.

One commenter requested that the EIS examine the environmental justice impacts of the Proposed Action, stating that a disproportionate number of low-income and minority communities would be affected by the coal export terminal and the rail transportation of coal from the Powder River Basin and relating mining. This same commenter remarked that Columbia River tribes and other tribes near and along the rail route would be affected by the Proposed Action. This commenter further requested that the EIS include “demographic information for all communities at the terminal site and along the rail lines that would ship coal to the port, as well as at the mine sites” and provided a list of potential communities to evaluate, including “Spokane, Spokane Valley, Millwood, Cheney, Washington, and Lame Deer, Ashland, Birney, Muddy Cluster, Hardin, Crow Agency, Billings South Side neighborhood, and Busby, Montana, among others”.

A few commenters requested that environmental justice concerns for tribes potentially affected by the Proposed Action be considered. In particular, one commenter stated that the Nez Perce Tribe members consume a greater amount of fish than non-tribal communities and that the volume of harvest is significantly lower than previous harvest levels. This same commenter also remarked that the tribe’s source of food such as salmon runs, has diminished and created affected the tribal culture, spirituality, and economy. Additionally, this commenter stated that tribal members face high poverty and unemployment rates, and stated that the EIS should include an environmental justice review of the disproportionate impacts the Proposed Action could have on the tribe.

Many commenters discussed their disapproval of the Proposed Action because of impacts on communities along the railway route to the shipping terminal. Some argued that pollution from coal dust coming off of uncovered trains would risk the health of their communities. Others argued that the projected additional trains would harm local businesses.

### 5.4.15 Visual Resources

Approximately 900 commenters discussed potential impacts on visual resources and aesthetics. Nearly all comments stemmed from a form letter campaign which expressed general concern regarding the potential impact the Proposed Action would have on the aesthetics of the Columbia River Gorge as a federally designated National Scenic Area. Aside from the form letter campaign, other commenters expressed concern about coal stockpiles, rail lines, and the impact of coal dust on the scenery, pristine areas, and visual resources. Several commenters stated that the Proposed Action would result in lighting impacts that could affect the viewshed of the area near the facility, particularly regarding artificial and nighttime lighting. One commenter was concerned about the influence of darkness to maintain plant and animal life cycles and how this would be affected by nighttime lighting. Another commenter suggested the use of personal motion and Radio Frequency Identification detectors to activate lighting only as needed as opposed to constant nighttime lighting. A couple of commenters expressed concern that haze and an increase in fugitive emissions due to train traffic may affect visibility in the Columbia River Gorge scenic areas.

### 5.4.16 Public Services and Utilities

Approximately 128,000 commenters remarked on the potential for public services and utilities impacts. Nearly all comments stemmed from 17 form letter campaigns. Seventeen of the form letter campaigns suggested that the Proposed Action would increase congestion at grade crossings resulting in delays to emergency vehicle response times. One form letter campaign inquired about local oil spill response resources and capabilities in the event of vessel traffic malfunctions or collisions. A majority of the unique submissions also expressed general concern that increased rail traffic would result in decreased access and increased delays at rail crossings affecting emergency service response times. A few of these commenters remarked that the EIS should address the impacts from increased rail traffic to local and interstate traffic congestion, and local and interstate emergency response times. The commenters suggested the delayed response times would increase “accidents, traumatic injury and death.” Similarly, a few commenters requested that the EIS analyze the capabilities of communities along the rail transportation route to respond to rail-related accidents including derailments, spills of hazardous materials, and collisions.

One commenter requested that the EIS include a “full health impact assessment of this issue along the entire rail corridor” and provided a list of issues for the EIS to address related to rail crossings (e.g., number of rail crossings, safety measures to be implemented at rail crossings, calculation of frequency and duration of rail crossing closures). This same commenter added that ambulance vehicles may encounter additional impacts because these vehicles would need to cross rail tracks twice: once for the retrieval of the patient and another to bring the patient to the hospital. The commenter expressed concern for the medical personnel that could be delayed at the rail crossing.

Several commenters expressed concern regarding the need to construct alternative means of access, such as bridges and overpasses over railroads, and for the financial impacts on municipalities that would be required to fund those capital improvements. Similarly, one commenter suggested that the Co-Lead Agencies examine mitigation options including deployment process and costs. One commenter stated concern that certain areas would be entirely cut off from emergency responders and that emergency responders may have no alternative but to access such areas by boat and, therefore, recommended that the EIS consider direct and cumulative impacts and funding the operation of the City’s fire boat and staff. One commenter remarked that an underpass in Livingston,

Montana is prone to flooding, which cuts off all access while a train is passing, and demanded that the EIS include this town in the assessment.

Multiple commenters requested that the EIS include certain evaluations and/or assessments to address public service and utility issues. Some commenters requested that the EIS identify and evaluate impacts on their city. One commenter also requested that the EIS identify impacts on a neighboring city to which it provides emergency medical services. One commenter stated the EIS should evaluate the impacts of the Proposed Action on existing infrastructure. One commenter requested the EIS address the impacts of an increasing rate of climate change to San Juan County's ability to replace public infrastructure, as well as consider the costs associated with an increase in storms with tides affecting public roads and infrastructure. One commenter expressed concern for coal dust to coat exposed substation equipment for utilities and expressed their expectation that the EIS would address the potential for fugitive dust from transfer operations to affect substation equipment and maintenance.

A few commenters requested that the analysis include impacts on local fire departments that would be responding to potential coal-related fires at the terminal site and along the rail routes. One commenter, remarking on the risk of coal-related fires at the terminal, requested that the appropriate fire department be provided with detailed information regarding, among other items, facility design and layout, facility operations and materials management, onsite staff and fixed system response capabilities, and chemical characteristics of the coal managed. Another commenter expressed the need for the EIS to conduct an emergency service analysis of the terminal facility and evaluate its ability to address coal fires.

## 5.4.17 Human Health

Approximately 141,400 commenters discussed various public health topics as they relate to the Proposed Action. Nearly all of these comments stemmed from 12 form letter campaigns. Five of the form letters mentioned human health impacts without providing additional suggestions. Two of the form letters expressed concern for human health impacts from the Proposed Action's coal dust from uncovered trains and/or diesel emissions. One form letter stated that the amount of GHGs that would result from the Proposed Action would lead to risks to human health, and another demanded that communities in Montana should not have to bear financial costs associated with adverse human health impacts associated with diesel fumes, coal dust, and coal fumes. Another form letter stated that studies show a reduction in the human lifespan in China due to the burning of coal and urged for coal dust to be intensively studied. Along these lines, one form letter requested for the EIS to include an HIA with a public scoping process, and another requested for the impacts on human health from the life cycle of coal facilitated by the Proposed Action to be analyzed. Another form letter campaign inquired about health impacts due to mercury from the burning of coal overseas sent back to the Pacific Northwest by prevailing winds.

In addition to form letter submissions, several commenters expressed general concern for public health concerns such as development of heart, lung, and kidney diseases; respiratory disease; asthma; cancer; and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder from exposure to coal dust, water contamination, and other environmental exposures related to the Proposed Action. Several commenters expressed concern specifically for coal workers, residents, children, the elderly, and pregnant women who may become exposed to particulates in the air that are released by coal mining and transport. The particulates of concern mentioned by commenters include exhaust fumes (diesel particulate matter), coal dust, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and acid mist. The

commenters also expressed health-related concerns with global emissions impacts related to the Proposed Action, cumulative impacts of diesel emissions from idling vehicles, surfactant use, and contamination of farmlands, livestock, forests, and water bodies from coal dust. One commenter raised concerns about the adequacy of fire department resources in responding to cases of a coal fire and the possibility of health hazards related to the combustion of coal in the Powder River Basin.

One commenter requested that the EIS analyze the health benefits from increased economic development and employment as a result of the Proposed Action as well as the mental health and social well-being impacts of the Proposed Action. This commenter and others requested that an HIA be conducted.

Some commenters raised concerns over the well-being of coal workers, life expectancy of coal workers, and fatalities due to lung diseases caused by working closely with coal dust. The commenters stated that it is the responsibility of the public officials to provide better work environments and jobs through the community college system. One commenter added that a lack of consultation with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration resulted in poisoning of food and migratory birds and endangered salmon with mercury and cadmium.

One commenter recommended that in the event of a hazardous spill from a train car that could contaminate the drinking water resources that are close to the rail lines, the risks of increased train traffic, coal dust and toxic residuals in the Nisqually Valley be evaluated as part of the EIS.

A few commenters expressed concern regarding the Proposed Action's impact on the health of tribal members, specifically tribal fishers that may be exposed to diminishing air quality and water quality as coal is being transported by rail from the Powder River Basin and exported by vessel through the lower Columbia River.

One commenter expressed concern that the increased pollution from coal dust and diesel pollution from trains could affect taxpayers when the health-related costs affect medical systems.

One commenter expressed their opposition for coal and their interpretation of its adverse effects on human health, but acknowledged that there is a lack of scientific studies identifying impacts on health due to increased number of coal trains.

## 5.4.18 Cumulative Effects

Approximately 19,300 comments were received regarding the Proposed Action's cumulative effects. Nearly all comments stemmed from six form letter campaigns that commonly referred to the scope of cumulative analysis, and provided a variety of suggestions on the range of cumulative effects the EIS should analyze. These suggestions and other cumulative analysis concerns submitted by form letter campaigns and unique commenters are summarized below.

- Other coal export proposals.** Since the Proposed Action is one of several other coal export facilities proposed in the Pacific Northwest—i.e., GPT, Coyote Island, etc.—numerous commenters requested that the EIS consider these coal export proposals in the Proposed Action's cumulative analysis or in a Programmatic EIS. Many of these commenters stated the combined impacts from all proposed facilities could harm the region with collective effects from, for example, pollution, traffic/rail congestion, and increase in GHGs. Some commenters further

stated that the EIS must include other coal export proposals because the combined volume of coal to be exported would result in ecological and global impacts considered to be significant, or even “disastrous.” Additionally, one commenter noted that of the five coal export facilities that have been mentioned by other commenters, only three are known by them to be “in any stage of preliminary or submitted application,” and recommended the EIS limit the cumulative analysis to known proposals. One commenter stated that while there are other coal export terminals proposed for Washington, the cumulative effects analysis should only cover impacts where projects share environmental resource within a defined geographic area.

- **Broad geographic scope.** Numerous comments were received requesting the EIS to involve a broad geographic scope when analyzing the Proposed Action’s cumulative effects. Commenters provided suggestions for broadening the analysis to include impacts on all western communities (Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming) located near the entire length of proposed railways (from the Powder River Basin to the proposed terminal), environmental impacts on communities residing along the entire length of proposed railway (from the Powder River Basin to the proposed terminal), impacts from mining operations in Montana and Wyoming, impacts from loading and shipping of coal via large ocean vessels, impacts through tribal “Ceded and Usual and Accustomed Use Areas”, and global effects related to the use of coal in Asia.
- **Other topics of concern.** Other topics of concern from comments regarding cumulative effects included considering all resource impacts of the Proposed Action combined, analyzing impacts “over the entire life of the potential project impact and not just the life of the project,” and impacts on mining regarding the potential for new mines that otherwise would not be considered without the Proposed Action.

#### 5.4.18.1 Climate Change

Approximately 193,900 comments were received on climate change. Nearly all comments stemmed from 24 form letter campaigns, of which 15 listed climate change among other issues of concern the commenters felt should be included in the EIS. Seven form letters further discussed climate change impacts as a result of combustion of fossil fuels from the use of coal at overseas power plants and/or GHG emissions from the mining and transportation of coal. One form letter focused on climate change concerns specifically relating to the San Juan Islands and requested the EIS include impacts associated with replacing San Juan’s public infrastructure and damage costs from the effects of climate change. Another form letter requested that climate change impacts be analyzed from the coal life cycle facilitated by the Proposed Action. Conversely, two form letters stated the Proposed Action would not result in an impact on climate change. One of these letters suggested that the degree of GHG emissions required to cause a global impact is vastly greater than the emissions that could be attributed to the Proposed Action. The other form letter discussed two points: that the Proposed Action would result in a beneficial impact by providing high-quality coal (as opposed to foreign suppliers), and that other coal suppliers would fill demand without the Proposed Action; thus, coal used globally would not increase and the net gain in GHG emissions by the Proposed Action would be insignificant.

In addition to the form letter submissions, several commenters listed climate change and/or the combustion of fossil fuels among other issues of concern they felt should be included in the EIS without providing additional information to explain their concern. However, a majority of commenters provided more detailed concerns on climate change associated with the increase of GHG emissions in Earth’s atmosphere. Most of these comments referred to the combustion of coal at

coal plants in Asia or other potential foreign coal markets. Several commenters also requested that the EIS consider GHG emissions from locomotives transporting coal from the coal mines to the proposed terminal, operations at the proposed ship terminal, and vessels transporting coal overseas. Additionally, a couple commenters requested that the Proposed Action also evaluate the effects of GHG emissions from mining the coal.

When discussing climate impacts, several commenters contended that the Proposed Action's contribution of GHG emissions would further damage the atmosphere. To supplement their arguments, some commenters provided information from numerous GHG scientific studies and/or referenced the recent fifth version of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's report that the commenters stated, indicated that there is a 95% certainty that climate change is being caused by man and the burning of fossil fuels. One commenter referenced the World Meteorological Organization report that the commenter stated as reporting the yearly average concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has reached a new high. Another commenter stated that 97% of scientists agree that fossil fuel burning is responsible for climate changes. More specific to the Proposed Action, a couple commenters included the statement that "each short ton of Powder River Basin coal contributes to over 2.8 tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere".

Due to these findings and the commenters' anticipated increases of GHG emissions by the Proposed Action, most commenters requested that the EIS thoroughly evaluate the Proposed Action's impacts on climate change. Along with these requests, some commenters provided details on numerous climate change effects, included a variety of suggestions regarding the scope and method to examine project GHG emissions, and explained current laws and public interest pertaining to reducing GHG emissions, as summarized below.

- **Climate change effects.** A majority of the commenter's discussions on climate change included particular issues of concern that were viewed as susceptible to climate change. Included were effects associated with natural and built environments and human health and safety. The natural environment effects of concern provided by the commenters included increasing temperatures (resulting in glacier melting, rising sea levels, declining springtime snowpack, declining river/stream flows, wildfires, etc.), ecosystem health (fish and wildlife, habitats, insect/pest infestation, vegetation/forests, treaty-reserved resources, etc.), extreme weather conditions (typhoons, droughts, flooding, etc.), and impacts on regional albedo (ability to reflect radiation). Also, a few commenters expressed concern for climate change effects specifically associated with the Pacific Northwest's National Parks/Refuges, the Columbia River Gorge, and the San Juan Islands. One commenter noted that Washington State is believed to be particularly vulnerable to a warming climate because of its reliance on snow-fed water supplies, and impacts from sea-level rise on its many shoreline communities. Climate change effects associated with public health and safety; the forest, agriculture, fishing/shellfish industries; coastal structures, and public infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities) were also noted.

Several commenters expressed general concern for the cumulative impact of ocean acidification. One of the commenters questioned what declines in salmon population due to acidification would mean for the Native American tribes of the region. A couple of commenters stated that then-Governor Gregoire's Executive Order 12-07 recommended a reduction of carbon dioxide to decrease the impacts of ocean acidification and the commenters stated that the Proposed Action is a direct contradiction to that order.

- **Scope of analysis.** Several commenters provided input on the level of climate change/GHG emissions analysis for the Proposed Action. One commenter stated that the methods for

conducting GHG emissions analysis are available and well developed, and further stated that the life cycle of GHG emissions associated with the Proposed Action would also be appropriate to consider. Another commenter declared that the scope of analysis should include “the lifetime of the project (i.e., until coal reserves are exhausted), and the atmospheric residence time of the emitted GHGs”. Another commenter suggested climatic impacts of the Proposed Action should be evaluated based on comparing life cycle emissions of GHGs. One commenter specifically referred to climate impacts on marine resources and requested that the EIS “provide an estimate of the carbon output of burning the maximum capacity of coal shipped overseas.”

Several commenters also advocated that when determining the Proposed Action’s climate change impacts, other coal export proposals should be considered as well. Commenters stated that the Proposed Action itself would not extend the planet past the “tipping point of climate change disaster,” but when combined with the emissions by other proposed coal export projects, climate change impacts could be significant. Other coal export proposals that were mentioned to be considered in the analysis included all proposals in Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and British Columbia Canada; however, most commonly referred to were the other proposals in the Pacific Northwest.

A few commenters suggested limiting the EIS analysis to not include the study of GHG emissions associated with end-use coal combustion. One commenter stated this is due to the “difficulty in demonstrating the GHG emissions can be tied to specific climatic impacts,” and provided an alternative approach that the commenter stated, is used in recent EISs by the Bureau of Land Use Management when analyzing climate impacts. One commenter stated that the cumulative effects analysis should not include GHG emissions from coal combustion due to the lack of causation between the Proposed Action and increased consumption of coal and because it would be difficult to determine the local impacts that may be connected to increased GHG concentrations.

A couple of commenters requested additional analysis when studying climate change impacts of the Proposed Action. One commenter requested that the Proposed Action conduct a cost benefit analysis because the demand for coal is not as high as it was when the coal export facilities were first proposed. Another commenter suggested the Corps work with other federal agencies and departments to prepare a National Climate Recovery Plan to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

- **Regulatory actions and public interest.** Several commenters discussed their views that implementation of the Proposed Action would conflict with or contradict public interest and/or government regulatory actions aimed to reduce GHG emissions. Several commenters stated that while their governments are making strides to reduce GHG emissions, the Proposed Action would increase emissions. The regulatory actions specifically mentioned included federal GHG regulations under the Clean Air Act for reducing emissions from both mobile and stationary sources, Washington State Governor’s Executive Orders to curb GHG emissions, Washington State GHG reduction standards to increase use of renewable energy and energy efficient sources, and EPA’s New Source Performance Standards for coal-fired plants to meet low carbon dioxide emissions. One commenter stated that the United States is a signatory of the Copenhagen Climate Accord, and suggested the Proposed Action would be inconsistent with the accord’s intent to reduce worldwide GHG emissions. Another commenter suggested that by providing overseas users with more cost effective coal, their efforts to convert to alternative energy could

be delayed and another stated “Approval of MBTL’s proposed coal export facility would promote increasing Asian coal consumption and undermine efforts to reduce GHGs.”

#### 5.4.18.2 Other Cumulative Effects

Approximately 166,500 commenters addressed other cumulative effects as they relate to the Proposed Action. Nearly all comments stemmed from 11 form letter campaigns, four of which expressed general concern regarding the potential for new mines that otherwise would not be considered without the Proposed Action. Two form letters and a few submissions requested for the EIS cumulative impact analysis to include the SR 432 Project. Other form letters requested several cumulative impacts be covered in the EIS including, ocean acidification, mercury pollution, train traffic, cumulative impacts related to Chinook salmon, and additional vessel traffic. One form letter suggested that an ocean acidification cumulative study include the potential biological, environmental, social, and economic consequences of the Pacific Northwest from the combustion of the coal shipped from the proposed terminal facility. Another form letter stated that the EIS should incorporate existing environmental documents while determining cumulative effects in lieu of conducting new reports and examination to prevent accumulating data that already exists in other previously approved NEPA documents.

In addition to the form letter campaigns, a number of the commenters listed projects or actions that they recommended for inclusion in the cumulative impacts analysis. The most common request was to include all coal export and oil export terminals. A couple of these commenters added that the EIS must include an analysis of the proposed Tongue River Railroad and/or the opening of new coal mines in addition to new coal export facilities. One commenter requested that the EIS specifically include the proposed Otter Creek mine in Montana and stated that a number of specific impacts would result from the development and operation of that mine including the likelihood that the mining company would not successfully or fully reclaim the land after mining operations are completed. The commenter also suggested that the West Decker Coal mine lease modification amendment application process should be considered in the cumulative analysis.

Several commenters stated that the Proposed Action would contribute to the impacts of mercury pollution (along with other heavy metal pollutants) that returns to North America after coal is burned in Asia through atmospheric deposition. These commenters suggested that deposition could affect a number of resources including wetlands, waterbodies, human health, fish and fisheries, the orca whale, and wildlife.

Numerous commenters remarked on the Proposed Action’s potential economic impact. Many commenters suggested that the Proposed Action and other similar proposed export terminals would have a cumulative impact on non-coal-related industries. Similarly, a commenter stated that the financial cost of grade separation should fall on the industries using the railway, not taxpayers. Pointing to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s suggested cap of 1,000 trillion tons of cumulative carbon emissions for the globe, one commenter asked that all U.S. port projects be postponed until a “carbon budget” has been developed to assess how Pacific Coast coal terminals align with existing and planned regional, national, and international carbon project costs. One commenter had multiple concerns regarding the economic costs to environmental resources resulting from accelerated climate change and coal combustion. The commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies evaluate the economic costs to the fishing industry resulting from increased levels of ocean acidification. The commenter also requested that economic costs associated with sea-level rise and increased intensity and frequency of storms on public infrastructure be evaluated.

Conversely, one commenter stated that a global evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action would overstep the bounds of a reasonable review.

Several commenters expressed concern for the cumulative impact on air and water quality. For example, one commenter suggested that the cumulative impacts analysis consider air quality impacts of engine exhaust from cargo vessels and tugs and upland machinery operations. Another commenter stated that the EIS must assess the cumulative effects to water resources from reasonably foreseeable coal mines in the Powder River Basin including those mines that the Proposed Action would induce. One commenter stated that the EIS must include in the cumulative evaluation of all stormwater and wastewater discharges into the Columbia River and concluded that the EIS should include an ambient water toxicity study using Ecology and EPA protocols. Another commenter stated that the EIS should consider the cumulative impacts on air and water from all proposed export facilities.

Regarding cumulative health impacts, one commenter requested that an HIA be prepared that evaluates the impacts of all coal ports in the Pacific Northwest. Another commenter requested to see a study of worldwide health effects from the combustion of coal.

Numerous commenters remarked on the potential cumulative economic impacts the Proposed Action and other similar proposed export terminals would have on non-coal-related industries.

A commenter remarked that there can be significant cumulative impacts on the estuarine ecosystem from dock building, dredging, wetland removal and fill, and ship traffic. Another commenter suggested that the cumulative impacts analysis consider the air quality impacts of engine exhaust from cargo vessels and tugs and upland machinery operations. A number of commenters made statements or included questions about cumulative impacts on Chinook salmon.

Several commenters requested that the EIS consider the cumulative impacts due to the increase in train traffic. One commenter stated specifically that increased train traffic from reasonably foreseeable coal and oil export projects would lead to significant impacts from dust, debris, derailments, and significant impacts on recreation, local economies, and quality of life. One commenter suggested that the key findings of the Western Organization of Resource Council's report, *HeavyTraffic Ahead*, be considered. Another commenter requested that the EIS consider cumulative effects on the "transportation system" in Washington.

Commenters also requested that the EIS include cumulative impacts from increased ship traffic. One commenter stated that the EIS should evaluate the cumulative risk of shipping to the North Pacific Great Circle Route, waters near Alaska's Wildlife Refuges, Alaska's Maritime Refuge, Washington's National Wildlife Refuges, and the lower Columbia River. In the cumulative analysis, the commenter recommended that other sources of impacts on Chinook salmon from oil spills and marine mammals, including sonar, oil and gas exploration, and seismic surveys be considered. The commenter also suggested that the EIS include the cumulative effects from invasive species spread by increased shipping. One commenter stated that the EIS must assess the cumulative effects of other dredging activities in the lower Columbia River. One commenter stated that the EIS must assess the cumulative effects on water resources from reasonably foreseeable coal mines in the Powder River Basin including those mines that the Proposed Action would induce. One commenter stated that a global evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action would overstep the bounds of a reasonable review.

## 5.5 Project Alternatives

### 5.5.1 No Action Alternative

Approximately 230 commenters discussed the No Action Alternative. Nearly all of the comments on the No Action Alternative stemmed from four form letter campaigns, one of which requested that the No Action Alternative consider potential negative impacts of the site remaining undeveloped. Another form letter requested that operation of the rail system for all forms of cargo with and without coal exports be included in the No Action Alternative. Another form letter requested the No Action Alternative include impacts from transporting coal whether or not the terminal is built. One form letter stated that the construction and operation of the terminal is not a proximate cause of the combustion of coal and if a close causal relationship cannot be established then the coal combustion should be considered under the No Action Alternative. Additional details of the comments are provided in the summary below.

A few commenters also requested that the No Action Alternative evaluate potential adverse impacts associated with the proposed site remaining unused in its current condition. Numerous commenters requested that the No Action Alternative include historic changes in levels of rail traffic in the region in creating a baseline traffic projection. A few commenters stated their expectations as to how the EIS should address the No Action Alternative, including conducting a thorough examination of the No Action Alternative without prejudgment of the outcome of the analysis. One commenter stated that unless “every impact identified, singly and in combination,” would not be fully mitigated, then they recommend the No Action Alternative.

One commenter stated that the No Action Alternative should recognize that existing coal exports occur from other facilities on the west coast of Canada and that there is the potential to expand these facilities. This commenter further remarked that existing Canadian terminal facilities use the same Washington State rail infrastructure that would be used for the Proposed Action, and therefore, the No Action Alternative would likely include, and should analyze, an increase in rail traffic along the same corridors as the Proposed Action, but bound for Canadian ports, and without a corresponding economic benefit to Washington State. A few commenters suggested that the same level of Asian coal imports would occur regardless of whether the Proposed Action is approved and, therefore, any impact associated with the transportation of coal should be analyzed under the No Action Alternative.

A few commenters suggested that if direct and cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action could not be adequately mitigated that the Co-Lead Agencies approve the No Action Alternative.

### 5.5.2 Identification of an Alternative Site for a Terminal

Approximately 40 commenters discussed alternative sites for the proposed terminal. Over half of the comments stemmed from one form letter campaign suggesting that there are no feasible alternative sites for a coal export terminal in the area. Additional details of the comments are provided in the summary below.

A few commenters provided general feedback on the identification of an alternative site for a terminal. One of these commenters requested that the EIS consider an alternative site location for the MBTL facility that is not along the lower Columbia River. The commenter suggested that the

alternative site not “require significant alteration of aquatic habitat that may be harmful to treaty-protected resources”.

Another commenter offered that an action that would meet the proposed purpose and need would consider making improvements to ports in Washington so ships with similar capacity could be used, instead of choosing a site that would require destruction of wetlands, filling of wetlands, or affecting vessel traffic. This commenter expanded on their argument by stating that although a waterfront site is needed for this project, it is not necessary for the site to be one that requires filling wetlands. This commenter stated that the proposed terminal facility site encompasses as much as 30 acres of wetlands, and concluded that the Corps should require mitigation from MBTL for unavoidable impacts, while also considering the opportunity to maintain wetlands by researching a reasonable alternative. Another commenter requested that the EIS consider sites that do not require any wetlands fill, even if the result would mean a project that is smaller in capacity or is more costly to build.

A few commenters suggested that there are no other alternative sites on existing brownfields, with no adjacent residential neighborhoods, and that have adequate port and rail access. One commenter continued by stating that of the alternative sites that were examined in Washington, Oregon, and California, the site in Longview was the only reasonable site that fulfilled the Applicant’s purpose and need. The commenter continued by stating that NEPA and SEPA do not require an alternative to be carried forward for analysis that would fail to meet the Applicant’s purpose and need.

### 5.5.3 Other Proposed Alternatives

Approximately 900 commenters provided feedback on other proposed alternatives. Nearly all of the comments stemmed from one form letter campaign in which commenters requested that the range of alternatives considered include those that better address the economic and environmental needs of the region. Additional details of the comments are provided in the summary below.

A couple of commenters provided feedback related to the material handling of coal. One commenter requested that pollution prevention technology (i.e., the fully enclosed storage and handling of coal) proposed for the Morrow coal terminal project, be considered as an alternative method for material handling of coal at the proposed MBTL terminal project site. Another commenter suggested streamlining the terminal from “train to boat” so the long-term storage of coal in open containers would not be needed.

One commenter did not suggest a new or unique alternative, but instead urged the Co-Lead Agencies to evaluate alternative designs for overwater structures, docks, and ship-loading equipment. The commenter suggested that an overwater alternative be evaluated to identify the opportunity to minimize impacts. The commenter suggested that the overwater design could consider “...minimizing the number of pilings required, minimizing the coverage area of new overwater structures, using alternative decking materials, and minimizing artificial lighting.” This commenter also suggested that an alternate dock configuration be evaluated as an alternative so as to identify potential options to minimize dredging requirements. This commenter further requested that the EIS consider evaluating alternative ship loading equipment designs that would identify alternatives that would minimize the risk of coal and coal dust entering the Columbia River.

One commenter stated that they expect several “reasonable alternatives” to be developed that are in line with the purpose and need for the Proposed Action. The same commenter added that the

alternatives should take into account the geographic scale of any impacts that need to be researched and/or mitigated. Another commenter stated that they expect the agencies involved to evaluate any reasonable alternatives, including alternatives that may not fall into the current scope. One of these commenters did not suggest a specific alternative to the Proposed Action, but instead requested that the EIS instead consider how these sites could be best used to generate the most jobs and have the most beneficial economic impact on the state and Cowlitz County.

## 5.6 Other Topics

Approximately 1,300 commenters discussed other topics or issues of concern that have not been mentioned previously. A number of comments stemmed from five form letter campaigns, two of which expressed general opposition and concern for risk of fires from coal trains. Three of the form letter campaigns expressed support for the Proposed Action asserting potential improvements to the neighboring Port of Longview, referencing the use of anthracite coal as part of the existing U.S. Department of Energy-approved water filtration system at the current site, and that the existing site would be used for heavy industrial purposes regardless of the Proposed Action.

Aside from the form letters, several commenters expressed other concerns. For example, one commenter stated that exporting energy supplies that may be needed in the future would be a “threat to national and economic security”. Another commenter suggested that the Corps work closely with the Federal Highway Administration, the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments and the City of Longview to ensure that the environmental and public health impacts of SR 432 Project are addressed in the EIS. One commenter was concerned about the effects on taxpayers to subsidize repairs to damages of rail and roads due to increased coal train activities, including the SR 432 Project.

Another commenter recommended the evaluation of potential impacts from the spontaneous combustion of Powder River Basin coal during rail transport and loading and storage at terminals. The commenter recommended mitigation be identified and suggested the terminal proponents pay for and implement the mitigation because of the inability of the state and county to require mitigation from the railroads. Other commenters stressed the importance of using best management practices in project planning. Some commenters also requested that the EIS considering effects due to pollution as a result of the heavy duty machines used during the coal mining process. One commenter requested that a responsible entity be identified for costs of “response, assessment of damages, remediation, cleanup, and restoration of natural resources and damages for all impacts” that could be the result of vessel accidents related to the Proposed Action. One commenter was concerned about the type of insurance held by the project proponent, and a few commenters requested that the EIS require the project proponent to develop a funding plan for the cleanup and decommissioning of the proposed terminal.

Alternatives to be analyzed, such as alternative overwater structures, alternative dock configurations, alternative coal transport and ship loading equipment designs were also recommended by a commenter. This commenter suggested that the alternatives should take into account “impacts resulting from the location and design of the structure and equipment as well as operational considerations including predicted number of vessels that may be expected to visit the facility under each of the suggested alternatives.” It was also suggested that the EIS analyze the need for safeguards to prevent potential release of toxic chemicals associated with the construction and future maintenance of concrete at the dock and trestle. The commenter also suggested that

consideration be made for the materials used at docks, such as treated wood and materials for fenders. The same commenter suggested that the EIS analyze how many pilings would be installed, the construction methods used, design and materials to be used and whether or not the structure would be designed to function at current and forecast sea level predictions. Another commenter suggested taxing coal to fund research for developing pollution-minimizing coal furnaces.

### **5.6.1.1 Public Involvement**

Approximately 30 commenters discussed public involvement as it related to the EIS process. A few requests were made for scoping meetings locations. These locations include Clark County, within the City of Dalles, Montana, City of Sandpoint, and Bonner County. Commenters expressed the desire for the public's concerns to be heard in these specific areas.

Some commenters called on other organizations and associations to participate in the review process. One commenter called on all faiths to conduct a complete review of the study, and another commenter suggested the resolution be forwarded to agencies having jurisdiction in the permitting process.

One commenter summarized testaments and concerns of scoping meeting attendees. Concerns included global climate change, aquatic impacts, local traffic congestions, and health concerns from increased diesel emissions, coal dust, and noise. This commenter also stressed the increased cultural and legal concerns of tribal governments.

One commenter expressed concern over the refusal of the Corps to hold hearings about the effects on Montana of granting permits. In response to this refusal, this commenter organized and held a meeting in Missoula, Montana to ensure the concerns of Montana residents was heard.

One commenter expressed the need to hold scoping meetings for the HIA in affected communities including the Columbia River Gorge. The commenter suggested that these scoping meetings provide a place for concerns and general information to be shared throughout areas that participate in the decision making process.

One commenter stated that because the Proposed Action is currently in the scoping phase of the EIS process, agencies and public are encouraged to provide input.

Another commenter stated that submitted scoping comments were merely based on the abbreviated project description found on the MBTL project website due to the lack of information available to the public. The commenter specifically mentioned the lack of information regarding modeling or studies that identify air and water quality impacts.

One commenter suggested that an extended scoping request could delay projects, which conflicts with national and international goals to increase exports and support economic development. The commenter explained that the Proposed Action is a means for economic development and job creation in communities in the lower Columbia River region hit by recession.

### **5.6.1.2 Comments Regarding the NEPA/SEPA Processes**

Approximately 4,000 comments were received regarding the NEPA and SEPA processes. A majority of these comments stemmed from 14 form letter campaigns that offered a preferred level of NEPA/SEPA environmental review for the Proposed Action. For example, four of the form letter campaigns requested that the EIS expand its geographical scope to include the greater Northwest

area, communities along the rail lines from the Powder River Basin to Longview, communities in Montana, and waterways surrounding the San Juan Islands. Conversely, four form letters suggested that the EIS scope not be extended, two of which stated that an extensive study for the Proposed Action was not warranted. Two other form letters requested that the EIS scope be limited to the local area and to not include impacts associated with the transport of coal, or global impacts stemming from a foreign nation's use of coal. Three form letters suggested limiting the EIS review process by incorporating existing environmental documents in lieu of conducting new reports and examination, using recent SEPA limited environmental reviews to guide the development of the EIS scope, and/or for Ecology to defer to the federal government for environmental review and permit decisions of the Proposed Action. Two form letters suggested the Corps refrain from making a decision on any permits until environmental review for all Pacific Northwest export proposals are completed.

In addition to form letter submissions, many commenters were concerned that the scope of the EIS is unprecedented and would only serve to delay the Proposed Action, which the commenters stated would harm the local and regional economy. Several other commenters stated that an EIS of this scope is "a change in regulations" and are concerned that an EIS of this scope would set a precedent for environmental reviews of other export commodities, which would harm the ability of the commodity to compete in a global market place and harm the ability of the export industry to sustain and grow.

Some comments discussed the timeline for the Proposed Action. Some commenters suggested that the scoping decision include a timeline for the issuance of the Draft EIS and Final EIS. A few commenters requested that the EIS be completed quickly so local economies can benefit from the jobs that the Proposed Action would create. A couple of commenters suggested that the lead agencies issue a Draft EIS within 1 year of the start of scoping and a Final EIS be completed within 18 months from the start of scoping. Other commenters suggested that the same timeline used by other "bulk commodity" terminals in Washington should be applied to the Proposed Action. One comment remarked on the amount of time it has taken to get through the scoping process and suggested that the Corps' regulations state that the final permit decision is to be made within 1 year of the permit application submittal. The commenter continued by stating that the scoping process, while it has been "extraordinary and unprecedented," has come at the expense of a timely EIS process. The commenter expressed concern that if the Co-Lead Agencies decide to conduct two separate EISs as they have for GPT that this decision could lead to additional delays and inconsistent results. Additionally, a commenter stressed the importance of having a streamlined and consistent regulatory review process.

Also submitted were several requests to consider (or not consider) the impacts of other Pacific Northwest Proposed Actions during the Proposed Action's EIS review. These and other suggestions on the level of review are summarized below.

- **Programmatic EIS.** The Proposed Action is one of several other coal export facilities recently proposed in the Pacific Northwest, (i.e., GPT, Coyote Island Terminal), and as such, many commenters requested that the Proposed Action be reviewed in conjunction with the other coal export proposals in a single Programmatic EIS. Because individual impacts of each coal export proposal is anticipated to be similar, the common rationale to this strategy discussed by commenters is to better identify the cumulative impact of all Pacific Northwest coal export proposals, or as some commenters stated, "provide an opportunity to consider the big picture". To support this approach, a few commenters provided examples of applicable NEPA/SEPA

guidelines, statements from EPA, and court cases. One proposed Programmatic EIS approach included preparing a Draft Programmatic EIS for each coal export proposal and then prepare a Final Programmatic EIS that looks at all impacts collectively. Another commenter suggested that if a Programmatic EIS is not conducted, then the other coal export proposals should be discussed under the EIS as cumulative or similar actions. One form letter stated that the Corps must prepare a Programmatic EIS to account for the significant cumulative impacts of the multiple coal export proposals.

- In contrast, several commenters expressed opposition toward a programmatic level of review. One commenter stated that “subjecting the Proposed Action to a [Programmatic] EIS is both unnecessary and inconsistent with the requirements of NEPA”. This commenter further rationalized that consideration of how a fuel product is used outside of the United States goes “beyond the intended scope of NEPA”. Another commenter added that the Corps “lacks sufficient control and responsibility over potentially related downstream and upstream actions to support the preparation of a broad [Programmatic] EIS”. Another commenter urged the Corps not to conduct a Programmatic EIS because the other pending proposals are not in the same geographic area and do not have similar or cumulative actions. One commenter requested for the federal agencies involved to conduct separate environmental reviews for each individual proposal that is in-depth, area-wide, and includes all impacts from the “mine to power plant.”
- **Broad review.** Several commenters stated the EIS should include analysis on the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the entire coal transportation and export process, including railroad shipment from the Powder River Basin, terminal construction/operations, marine vessel shipment, and resulting pollutants/GHGs emitted from overseas power plants. In this regard, several commenters supported this type of wide-level environmental review currently being conducted for the GPT proposal, and/or requested that the same level of review for the Proposed Action. Additionally, a few commenters also expressed their dissatisfaction with conducting a more limited site-specific level of review for the Proposed Action. Conversely, many commenters requested that the EIS conduct a project-level review that provides a localized scope with focus on the environmental effects that are directly impacted by implementation of the Proposed Action itself. A couple commenters added that to extend the scope outside of immediate or localized environmental impacts is “unprecedented” and would go far beyond the intent of EIS regulations. One commenter stated that a project-level review was adequate since the Proposed Action “does not cause or create, directly or indirectly, the impacts related to the extraction of any natural resources, or the use of such resources.” In support of project-level review, another commenter stated, “Issues that are beyond an agency’s expertise, that are indirect or speculative, or cannot be evaluated objectively, should be excluded.” Commenters also provided arguments that an extended EIS scope (beyond the terminal project) could set a “dangerous precedent” and negatively impact future development projects and economic prosperity.

One commenter stated that although there is no precedent for NEPA to analyze main line traffic for commodities in transit, if there was a need an analysis of all commodity transport (by rail, road, or waterway) would be needed. The commenter added that an analysis of full rail network for every project utilizing the system would also result in duplicative impacts.

Many comments were received requesting for the EIS to involve a broad geographic scope when analyzing the Proposed Action’s environmental effects. Several of these comments requested that the EIS scope not just analyze the impacts in the immediate vicinity of the proposed

terminal, but to also include impacts along the rail corridors and affected surrounding region. One commenter suggested that only impacts associated with a close causal relationship and within a defined geographic scope be analyzed. Additional trains associated with the Proposed Action, and their impacts on communities located along the rail corridor, were a common concern among commenters, and one commenter added that the additional coal trains would uniquely impact the local planning efforts in Spokane County. Additionally, a few commenters requested that the EIS consider impacts specific to their particular city or community.

- **Other proposals (noncoal exports).** A few commenters requested that other particular Washington State projects be included in the scope of the EIS. These include two proposed transportation projects: the SR 432 Project in southern Washington and the Bridging the Valley project, a series of projects in the 42-mile corridor between Spokane, Washington and Athol, Idaho. Because the SR 432 Project is planned to be documented as a NEPA Categorical Exclusion, one commenter urged Cowlitz County and the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments to reconsider their decision to not analyze the SR 432 Project as part of the Proposed Action's NEPA/SEPA process to ensure that environmental and public health impacts of SR 432 Project are addressed. Contradictory to this request, another commenter stated that the SR 432 Project would undergo full environmental review and compliance with NEPA/SEPA and, therefore, requested that the SR 432 Project not be considered for inclusion under the Proposed Action's scope. Regarding the other transportation project, one commenter requested that the EIS "assess the impact of additional coal trains for consistency with the [Bridging the Valley project]".
- **Request for consultation or coordination with other agencies.** A few commenters mentioned consultation with the Co-Lead Agencies during the Proposed Action's environmental review. One commenter requested to be treated as a consulted agency as defined in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-1-724 throughout environmental review and recommended further coordination with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. One commenter stated that they expect to be involved in mitigation discussions. A couple of commenters requested government-to-government consultation with the Corps on the Proposed Action.
- **Other topics of concern.** Other general topics of concern included a request to conduct the EIS based on conservative or "worst-case" scenarios, a suggestion to analyze the impacts on lands covered by DNR's *Washington's Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan*, a request to include an HIA with a public scoping process, and a statement that the EIS should be completed before the issuing of any permits is considered. One commenter suggested that the NEPA/SEPA process was not the appropriate venue to resolve policy issues regarding "the role of coal in domestic energy export policies" and requested that the EIS be treated no differently than any other commodity export terminal would. One comment stated that the increased volume of rail and marine vessel traffic associated with these projects is a connected action that should be considered in the EIS.
- **Comments specific to the SEPA process.** Several comments pertain to the SEPA process and timeline. One commenter suggested that state policies designed to ensure a timely and efficient permitting and review process have not been realized and that the scoping process, while it has been "extraordinary and unprecedented," has come at the expense of a timely EIS process. Other commenters expressed disappointment that Ecology pursued a broader scope than the Corps in the GPT project and one commenter suggested that two proceedings could lead to delayed timelines and produce inconsistent results. A commenter requested that the Co-Lead Agencies

include a discussion of reasonable and feasible mitigation measures that could offset potentially significant environmental impacts. A couple of commenters suggested that such inconsistently applied regulations could hinder the commodity industry. Specifically, the commenters suggested that this approach would be discriminatory against out-of-state commerce, which is not allowed under the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution of the United States. Additionally, one commenter stated that Ecology does not have legal authority under SEPA to analyze in-state main line use of the rail network citing the Doctrine of Federal Preemption and Interstate Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution.

- **Other general topics of concern (SEPA process).** Other comments of concern regarding the SEPA process included a request for the EIS to clearly show how the conclusion of insignificance was reached. One commenter requested the Co-Lead Agencies include a review the Management Plan for the National Scenic Area as it contains standards for determining when a proposed development would have an adverse effect in the National Scenic Area.

### 5.6.1.3 Comments Regarding General Project Support or Opposition

Comments received during public scoping contained sentiments of support or opposition for a specific issue of concern. Approximately 170,800 comments, however, expressed general support or opposition without providing specific statements related to issues of concern. Nearly all general comments stemmed from 20 form letter campaigns. The following summary includes a synopsis of the commenters' general opinions of the Proposed Action, and also provides accounts of general feedback.

#### General Support

Approximately 600 commenters expressed general support for the Proposed Action, most of which derived from seven form letter campaigns, of which four expressed support due to the jobs and boost to the local economy that the Proposed Action may provide. Two form letter campaigns expressed general support of the Proposed Action, but did not provide additional information to support their statements.

In addition to the form letter campaigns, numerous commenters expressed general support for the Proposed Action without providing additional information to explain their support. A majority of these comments requested that the Proposed Action not be delayed and asked that the scope of review not exceed precedent.

Many other unique comments stated that the Proposed Action would result in environmental, social, and economic benefits. Some of these commenters added that they supported the environmental review process, which would present a "clear picture" of the Proposed Action and demonstrate its benefits. Several commenters stated that the present federal and state environmental regulations are more than adequate to address the proposed terminal, and felt the Proposed Action should move forward since the Applicant has, and would continue to, maintain and present ongoing efforts to uphold current environmental regulations. In addition to stating their support for the Proposed Action, some commenters noted the Applicant's effort to engage the Longview community over the 3 years the Applicant has been at the old Reynolds site. Several commenters discussed their opinion on how the Proposed Action would implement a "state-of-the-art" facility, one of which should be used as an example of how future ports should be developed.

Other commenters in support of the Proposed Action stated their general support for coal, including statements that coal hazards either pose no danger or can be effectively mitigated and managed.

## General Opposition

Approximately 170,100 commenters expressed general opposition to the Proposed Action. Nearly all of these comments stemmed from 13 form letters, nine of which expressed disapproval without including additional rationale to support their statements. Two form letters stated disapproval of the Proposed Action since “coal is toxic”, and another letter expressed disapproval because of impacts on endangered species and the local and global human environment. One commenter expressed disapproval because the Proposed Action would be against their religious values.

In addition to the form letter campaigns, numerous commenters stated their opposition of the Proposed Action and/or all proposed Pacific Northwest coal export terminals without providing additional information to explain their concern. Many of these commenters added statements against the mining, transport, and/or use of coal. Other commenters added general explanations and reasoning to support their views, as summarized below.

## Other Comments

Approximately 50 commenters addressed other concerns about the Proposed Action. Some commenters addressed concerns regarding cleanup and mitigation of the proposed facility site under Washington State’s Model Toxics Control Act (MCTA). Some commenters expressed confidence in the efforts to clean up and mitigate the existing site in preparation for the development of the Proposed Action. Some commenters expressed concern that the nature of contamination and method of cleanup at the existing site be fully resolved prior to completion of the EIS and that conditions of the site after cleanup are disclosed in the environmental document. One commenter discussed concerns related to the grain that is stored at the current Longview shipping facility including the potential for grains to be contaminated with coal residing at the facility. The commenter asked that the EIS address the risk of contamination and hazards placed on the shipping facility by the Proposed Action. Some commenters discussed the Reynolds (aluminum) site and suggested this site be cleaned up. Another commenter stated that the history of the Proposed Action included an act of deception by the Applicant when they attempted to obtain a Shorelines Substantive Development Permit and other authorizations under the alleged pretense of a 5-million-ton-per-year facility. According to the commenter, the EIS should include a description of this history in the EIS.

Many commenters stated that they opposed the Proposed Action because of the potential impacts on people and/or the environment that could result. Most commonly noted was the concern of the Proposed Action’s contribution to global warming and climate change, and/or expressed general concern for the future of the planet and future generations. A few commenters based their views on potential risks associated with coal transport accidents/spills. One trending argument throughout these comments was that the negative impacts of the Proposed Action “far outweigh its benefits.” For example, one commenter stated that it was “misguided to support so few jobs at such a huge environmental and health cost.”

# Chapter 6

## Next Steps

All comments are under review by the Co-lead Agencies to help inform the breadth and range of considerations in the EIS. The Co-Lead Agencies will be making a determination on the scope of the NEPA and SEPA EISs in early 2014 after reviewing the scoping comments and conducting internal policy reviews. Although the Co-Lead Agencies will establish a scope of study, flexibility must be retained to make reasonable adjustments to the scope of an EIS if significant new circumstances or information arise that bear on the proposal or its impacts.

A few elements are common to all NEPA EIS documents, and will be included in the overall scope. These elements include a:

- Description of the Proposed Action, and the purpose and goals of the proposal;
- Range of reasonable on-site alternative designs, as well as a no action alternative; and
- Discussion of the existing environmental conditions and analyses of the potential impacts that might result from each of the alternatives.

If significant impacts are anticipated, then the EIS must explore possible mitigation measures to those impacts. Once a draft EIS is published, the public will be invited to review and comment on the document and participate in public hearings. Figure 6-1 presents an overview of the NEPA process and next steps.

**Figure 6-1. NEPA EIS Process and Next Steps**



**Appendix A**  
**NEPA Notice of Intent and SEPA Determination of**  
**Significance**

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**Appendix B**

**Scoping Display Advertisements and Informational Flyer**

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**Appendix C**  
**Scoping Meeting Display Boards**

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