

RESOLUTION 14779

**Thurston County Board of Commissioners
Resolution Opposing Coal Export**

WHEREAS mounting evidence demonstrates the overwhelming negative impacts of coal mining and combustion on public health and the environment.

WHEREAS Washington State already recognizes the severe economic, public health, and environmental impacts of climate change on this state (80.80 RCW; Executive Order No. 0905).

WHEREAS in 2010, Thurston County made a commitment to reduce fossil fuel dependence and greenhouse gas emissions from county government operations by amending its transportation policies, completing a baseline emissions inventory and forecast, and developing a Climate Action Plan.

WHEREAS because of its extremely combustible nature, coal is transported via opentop rail cars without covers. Thurston County communities in and along rail lines, including Bucoda, Tenino, East Olympia, and Nisqually, could see up to 20 coal trains rolling through town every day, leading to contamination of farmland, forests, lakes, streams and rivers. According to Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), railroad studies estimate that each coal car can lose up to 500 pounds of coal in transit. This coal contains toxic, heavy metals - including mercury, arsenic, and lead - and exposure to these in high concentrations is linked to cancer and birth defects.

WHEREAS increased rail traffic on this scale will lead to an increase in diesel emissions in communities along rail lines. Exposure to particulate matter from diesel engines has been linked to impaired pulmonary development in adolescents, increased cardiopulmonary mortality and all-cause mortality, measurable pulmonary inflammation, increased severity and frequency of asthma attacks, emergency room visits, and hospital admissions in children, increased rates of myocardial infarction (heart attack) in adults, increased risk of cancer, and increased asthma and lung disease in children.

WHEREAS coal from the Powder River basin is highly explosive, the transportation of coal in open rail cars has been known to create public safety hazards, and the accumulation of coal on or near rail lines has led to train derailments, explosions and fires.

WHEREAS coal export terminals in other parts of the nation and world are associated with significant air and water pollution.

WHEREAS new coal export terminals are expected to result in an increase in coal train traffic in Washington of at least 20 additional trains per day, causing concerns about blocked roads inhibiting the travel of emergency vehicles, pedestrians, access to waterways near the rail lines for fishing and other recreational use, and other vehicle traffic.

WHEREAS Washington has been a national leader in creating clean-energy jobs and innovating, developing, demonstrating, and marketing clean energy technologies and practices that promote sustainable global economic development. Coal export promotes the most destructive and unsustainable energy development practices.

RESOLVED, That the *Thurston County Board of Commissioners* opposes coal export terminals in Washington State and supports economic growth that does not jeopardize Washington State's commitment to fight the serious impacts of climate change.

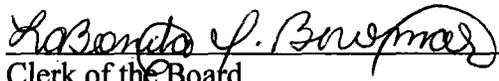
RESOLVED, That the *Thurston County Board of Commissioners* urges the Governor and the Legislature to work on a comprehensive policy opposing coal export terminals in Washington State.

RESOLVED, That the *Thurston County Board of Commissioners* requests that the Army Corps of Engineers conducts an area-wide environmental impact statement that takes into account the cumulative impacts from mine to plant of the six coal export proposals in the Pacific Northwest.

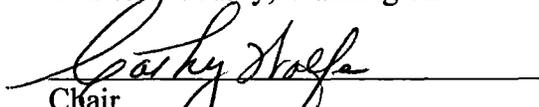
RESOLVED, That the *Thurston County Clerk of the Board* be directed to transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor of Washington, the State Lands Commissioner, Federal public officials, the Army Corps of Engineers and to each Senator and Representative from the County in the State of Washington Legislature.

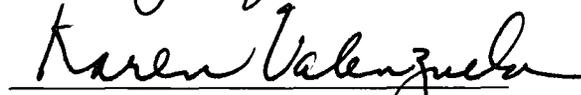
ADOPTED: August 7, 2012

ATTEST:


Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Thurston County, Washington


Chair


Vice-Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

JON TUNHEIM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY


Commissioner

By: 
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney