

We of the human race are in a grim battle with hostile forces that are at times too evil to contemplate. Our enemies are engaged in destroying much of our planet, and intent on bringing our population to seven percent of our current level. The math for this is simple: 0.5 billion (target pop.) divided by 7 billion (current pop.) equals 7 percent. Our enemies are using many methods to kill us. Wars are being started endlessly. Diseases are constantly being created. World food supplies are slashed by violence and deceit. Fresh water is variously poisoned and stolen. Massive campaigns of lies divide and conquer us. Financial fraud and theft are used to impoverish us. Great and cruel campaigns contaminate, ruin, rape, and devastate our peoples, our forests, our farms, our resources, even our air.

The current campaign to transform our Cowlitz County community into a black and toxic river of coal is part of the global effort to sicken and kill us by attacking our air, water, and land at the same time. The river of coal is planned to extend for thousands of miles, across oceans and on to the land masses of Asia. The peoples of Asia are already being driven to desperation as the rivers of coal already there infest their lands, poison their rivers, and foul the air to the point that it, too, is poisonous. Entire enraged communities in China have rioted to block the invasion of more coal-fired factories. Major Chinese metropolises (e.g., Beijing) are being made uninhabitable by their own pollution.

And WHY does all this go on? The 'explanation' is that coal is the world's cheapest and most abundant form of energy. This is true as long as the costs of the consequences of using coal are not factored in. For Longview, the river of coal will mean increased economic activity. This is quite true. However, besides the work needed to move the coal from train to ship and on across the oceans, there will doubtless be a bonanza for our local healthcare industry. Longview is going to become a sharply more dangerous place to live. Respiratory illnesses, heart disease, cancers, and the entire unholy host of coal-town miseries will come to Longview to stay. In addition to coal dust, the huge increases in diesel soot from coal train engines will have their effects.

Coal fits well into the global energy strategy aimed at killing people. Petroleum has had spectacular successes in recent years. That one Macondo oil rig "spill" in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 has begun a cavalcade of death, illness, and epic environmental disasters. Nuclear energy is on its way to making the Pacific Ocean one colossal dead zone, all thanks to the cascading series of "accidents" in Japan's Fukushima power plant, begun in 2011 and compounded since then.

The city of Longview, Washington has a recent history of being approached by industrialists with proposals promising prosperity to a community that has been beset by economic downturn. It's pretty obvious by now that the people of Longview are widely thought to be a little slow-witted, easily led, not sophisticated: a community of rubes...suckers. The hucksters come to Longview because they see it as a pushover for a good con. Regarding this parade of tin-plated economic miracles, Longview could be considered the de facto capital for the Lower Columbia River region of northwest Oregon and southwest Washington.

Recent proposals include the idea of putting an ethanol manufacturing plant inside the city of Longview. Then there was the proposed natural gas transfer facility downriver on the Oregon side. A strange feature of the facility was a gas pipeline that would have snaked its way through Washington and Oregon as it avoided communities likely to put up major resistance. An ethanol plant did in fact get built in nearby Clatskanie, Oregon, but it only ran at full capacity for 20 days. And now, several schemes are ongoing for coal transfer stations to handle product from the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming. Besides the one for Longview, there have been proposals to move coal by rail along the Oregon side of the Columbia. And, let us not forget the pitch earlier this year to bring CRUDE OIL by rail through Longview for transshipment to ports in Asia.

County boards of commissioners, city councils, port commissions, and other regulatory bodies in our region have a pronounced tendency to favor these proposals when the hucksters march in with their ideas. Of course, the proponents always (yes, ALWAYS) claim that they'll be good for the communities economically. They also declare that

River City.

Popular sentiment regarding this coal dock plan is strongly in opposition, even with a slanted local newspaper and a barrage of PR releases from the coal pushers. Maybe the Old Guard of Longview's hard-nosed pro-heavy industry citizens has been supplanted by 'immigrants' who aren't nearly as willing to put up with high levels of pollution and the bludgeoning of their quality of life.

In the long run, people everywhere lose patience with political institutions that screw them over day in and day out. The words of Jefferson begin to resonate strongly:

When in the course of human events...

-----Al Riggin, Longview, Washington
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