

Testimony of 09/17/13 to Army Corps of Engineers, Washington
Department of Ecology and Cowlitz County on

Concerns about the Impacts on Recreational Visitors of Coal Shipments Through the Columbia Gorge to the Proposed Millenium Bulk Terminals

I am a long time resident of the City of Portland and a member of the Friends of the Columbia Gorge. One reason I choose to live in this area is the proximity to outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, cycling and boating in the Columbia Gorge and the Cascades.

I am concerned about plans to ship 44 million tons of coal a year through the Columbia Gorge to the planned Millenium Bulk Terminals in Longview. The Gorge is a National Scenic Area and an irreplaceable resource for outdoor recreation for those of us that live in the Portland -Vancouver metropolitan area. I am concerned that the coal dust blown from the open cars on the trains will pollute the air breathed by those recreating in the Gorge and on the Columbia River. Many hiking trails are just above and close to the train tracks on both the Washington and Oregon sides of the Gorge. A number of frequently visited waterfalls on the Oregon side of the Gorge such as Multnomah, Wahkeena and Latourell Falls are also quite close to the train tracks that run along the river's edge. Visitors might be harmed by inhaling diesel fumes and coal dust. I am particularly concerned about the latter which contains toxic metals such as mercury. Please study the impact of the coal dust and diesel fumes on visitors to the hiking trails and waterfalls along the Gorge. I for one spend a lot of time in these places.

I am also concerned about the amount of noise caused by the increase in train traffic. I think that it would adversely impact the experience of those visiting or camping at recreation sites near the river. Please study the potential noise impact on recreational sites of increased train traffic in the Gorge.

Also, I am concerned about the effects of shipping coal down the gorge on those seeking to enjoy the river. Coal trains will make it difficult for fishermen, boaters and windsurfers to access the river. If the coal is barged, barge traffic will increase the risk of accidents and any barge accident that involved a spill of coal into the Columbia might contaminate the river's salmon and sturgeon, irreplaceable resources. Please study of impact of coal trains and barges on river recreation and the river's fish.

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