



# OREGON **rural** ACTION

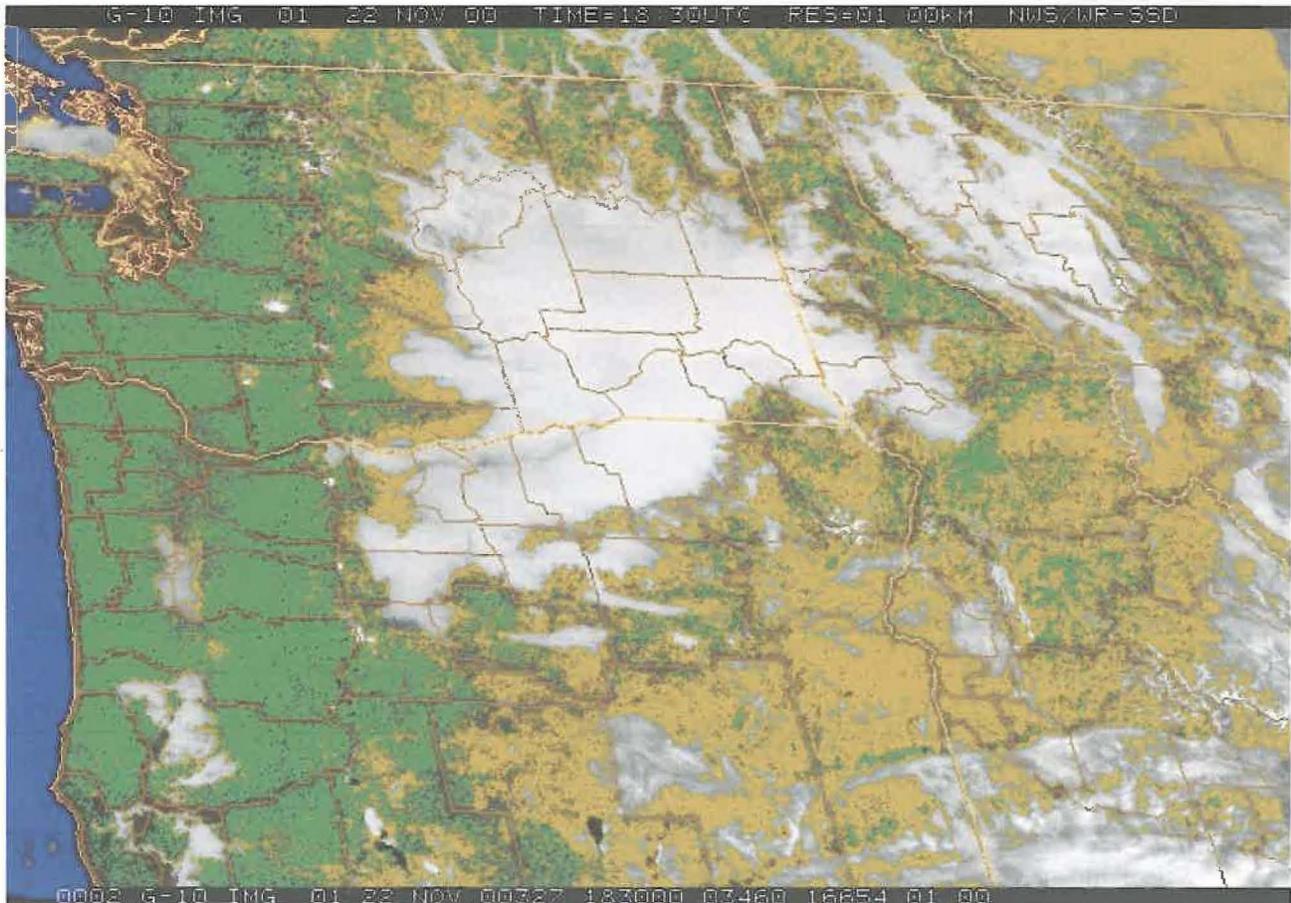
SOWING SEEDS OF **CHANGE**

**Heavy Traffic Ahead** (<http://heavytrafficahead.org/>), a report commissioned by the the *Western Organization of Resource Councils*, found that:

Based on announced and proposed expansion plans [...] coal shipments [...] could very well exceed 75 million tons per year by 2017 and 170 million tons by 2022.

## What this means

- ∞ To transport that much coal, 34 fully loaded coal trains of 125 cars each would be needed with one being unloaded every 12 seconds, every day of the year, at one of the Northwest ports.
- ∞ BNSF has done studies indicating that from 500 lbs to a ton of coal can escape from a single loaded coal car.
- ∞ That means 500,000 to 1.1 million pounds of coal dust a day will be lost from trains just in the Columbia Basin. In the wintertime, that dust will wind up on the ground, in the waterways, or in the cloud bank that seals off the Basin for weeks at a time. That cloud extends to the mountains on all sides. Here's one image from a photograph of a typical inversion:



- ∞ The coal dust suspended in the cloud falls out as soon as the rain and snow return. It will end up in the streams and rivers feeding the Columbia. That will hurt the insect populations which feed the salmon and steelhead migrating throughout the river system, in both Oregon and Washington.
- ∞ Other times of the year, the coal dust lofted high into the air will be transported around the region. That dust is public health issue, one that will cost money and lives.
- ∞ Since the dust will end up in the soil and water around the region it's a farm issue.
- ∞ The dust is also An issue for anyone who maintains equipment. Coal dust is abrasive. It can damage everything from heavy machinery to computer servers.

All of the **BNSF** rail lines through Eastern Washington go through the region as this map shows:



If the proposal for 170 million tons a year becomes a reality, tons of dust from all that coal will be end up in the Columbia Basin.

That's a problem for Washington, and for Oregon also . There's nothing green about coal dust.

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