

Testimony Statement for the Scoping Hearing in Pasco, WA
October 1, 2013

Concerning the Approval of the Millennium Bulk Terminals in Longview, WA

Distinguished Representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the WA Department of Ecology, and Cowlitz County, Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Caroline Bowdish. I have made Pasco my home for 39 years as a school teacher, a mother and an active citizen in the community. I live in the house my father built and enjoy gardening in the yard. **My home** is located only a few blocks from the railroad tracks.

One of the many concerns and fears I have of greatly increased train traffic is the coal dust that would blow off hundreds of railcars. By BNSF's own study, **each** railcar loses **at least 500 pounds** of coal dust in transit. I know that a crusting agent is applied to the surface of the coal, but according to Terry Garvey, who formerly was in charge of transportation for a large Canadian coal exporter, the crusting agent tends to break down en route. I quote, "All it takes is a malfunction of a single nozzle in the spray apparatus at the mine ... to create a 'duster,'" that is, a train shrouded by a cloud of airborne dust and chunks of coal that can settle for a kilometer on each side of the tracks. This problem is exacerbated when the weather is dry and windy. We have many such days here. When a lot of dust blows, it invades **buildings**, including homes, schools, and hospitals, and closed and locked cars. At its worst, the dust even gets in your teeth. If that dust is desert soil, it later washes harmlessly into the ground. But if that dust is coal, black grit coats every car, windowsill, and plant in the area. Coal, with its heavy metal toxins, does not benignly become part of the soil.

I would like you to study the probable effects of so much coal dust on our soil and groundwater. How long will it have to build up before my neighbors and I can no longer grow our gardens? What will it do to our property values? Will our homes be unattractive to buyers? If property values decline, how seriously will the county's and school district's tax bases be affected?

The Northwest is a wonderful place to live. If these coal terminals and their trains are approved, how long will it be before that statement is no longer true?