

I am a 62 yr. old resident of Bow, WA. I am concerned about all the coal export terminals in Washington and Oregon, both because of local effects on transportation, air and water quality, and the more global effects such as climate change. This comment addresses three of the arguments coal export proponents make that I think deserve your critical evaluation:

“The coal will just go to Canada anyway.” Please study critically whether or not building a terminal at Longview is contingent upon NOT building one in Canada, or vice versa. The truth is that the coal companies are trying to send as much coal overseas, as quickly, and from as many destinations as they can get permits for and build, as fast as possible. Any train traffic through our communities, or shipping traffic in our waters resulting from the terminal at Longview, should it be built, will add that many more trains and ships to what results from what is going on elsewhere. Canada certainly is not going to shut down its coal export facilities if we build them here.

“China will just get the coal it wants from somewhere else if we don't sell it to them.” It just isn't that simple. Thomas Powers, in an economic analysis of what drives the construction and operation of coal powered plants, predicts that coal imported by China from the U.S. will likely drop the price of coal in China, encouraging construction of more coal-burning plants in China, and possibly locking in coal burning as a source of power for years to come, as the new plants will be operational for many years.

“Coal Trains are already coming through our communities.” Of course they are. The question is a matter of degree. Please don't take this at face value, and “do the math.”

Thank you for your consideration.