

EIS STATEMENTS

By David Machtolf

“We view the energy export issue facing the Pacific Northwest not as a question of ‘jobs versus the environment’, as it is popularly described, but as a clear choice about our Northwest quality of life and the health of our salmon, upon which our lives and so many of our local jobs depend,” said Brian Cladoosby, the influential Swinomish chairman.

Cladoosby explains that many of these people’s jobs and lives relies on the environment and surrounding ecosystem and while the coal mining would create a lot of new jobs, it will ruin many of the existing local ones and pollute the environment in which they call home. “The choice is about the type of life we want for all our grandchildren for generations to come,” Cladoosby added.

Cladoosby is concerned that the coal mining will ruin the livelihood of the younger generations of his family. He wants his family to grow up with the same experiences that he had, and the rest of his tribe had. Another person from the Swinomish tribe said “The passing of this resolution is good not only for Indian country but for the great Sea.” The Swinomish tribe would lose huge sums of money if the salmon run was to not come through their land, with the pollution from the mines the salmon will have no choice but to change routes or suffer in polluted waters.

<http://blog.seattlepi.com/seattlepolitics/2013/05/20/no-coal-trains-no-export-ports-say-northwest-indian-tribes/>

By Carissa Thomas

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The Yakama Nation, a tribal alliance located in Washington State near the Columbia River Gorge, will be seriously effected by the installation of the Coyote Island coal terminal. Negative effects on the Yakama Nation's environment is present in five main areas: water quality & aquatic species, habitat, air quality, climate change, and cultural resources.

Water quality and aquatic species in the Columbia River will be seriously effected by coal dust. Coal dust is a byproduct of coal mines and trains, it has a toxic effect on water and the fish living within it. The Columbia River's ecosystem is fragile, the loss of salmon, sturgeon, and lamprey will devastate the river. Tribal fisheries will suffer with the implementation of the Coyote Island terminal, four important tribal gillnets will be destroyed. The tribal gillnets are sources of necessary revenue and food for the Yakama Nation.

The habitat of Yakama Nation will be negatively effected by the Coyote Island terminal, endangered species will be susceptible to predation during the construction of the terminal. The terminal's construction will create habitat for native and nonnative predators, threatening endangered species livelihood.

The air in the Columbia River Gorge has some of the highest levels of air pollution and acid rain in the Northwest, this pollution has been traced to burning coal. Air pollution in the Columbia River Gorge damages historical pictographs and petroglyphs, irreplaceable works of art.

Climate change effects the Yakama Nation through the increasing temperature of water. The levels of toxins rises as water warms, the toxins then seep into the fish and surrounding wildlife. An increase of methylized mercury in Columbia River Basin fish has been directly linked to increased water temperatures.

The Yakama Nation's cultural resources are in danger, the Coyote Island terminal threatens numerous burial sites, legendary sites, and villages. The Coyote Island terminal is 1/4 mile from the Coyote Island Burial Site.

The Yakama Nation is fighting for more than just land, they are fighting for their way of life. The Yakama Nation lives off of the Columbia River George, they are connected to the river in a way an outsider will never understand. The construction of the Coyote Terminal will bring immense harm to the Yakama Nation, their environment and very way of life will be on the brink of destruction.

<http://www.coaltrainfacts.org/docs/Yakama-Nation-3-30-12.pdf>

By Hannah Brown

Native Americans- Ancestral Value of Land

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The Northern Cheyenne Tribe resides along the Otter Creek Valley where a proposed Tongue River Railroad could be built for the transportation of coal. The Lummi Tribe, a tribe from Washington's Puget Sound, is at risk of having the proposed Cherry Point terminal being built as the last stop for coal before it gets shipped to Asia. For thousands of years, these Native American Tribes have called the residing lands home but due to Arch Coal there is the possibility that their homeland could be destroyed or taken away. The Native American view on land is a spiritual intuition as well as a means for survival. Land is sentimental to tribes because it inhabits a part of their ancestry. Kenneth Medicine Bull, a Sundance Priest from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, said, "We need to protect our way of life. I addressed the grandfathers, those who had gone before us, and I asked them to hear our prayer and stand beside us"(Adams). Kenneth Medicine Bull asked upon his ancestral grandfathers, which supposedly preside among all that is living on their homeland, to help them put a stop to the proposal for the railroad. Native Americans believe that the land is inhabited by their ancestors. Every function of the land; the water they drink, the food they grow, and the air they breathe, are seen as parts of their former ancestors. The land at the proposed export terminal site at Cherry Point is supposed to be built on the Lummi tribe's sacred burial ground. The Lummi tribe's burial grounds are considered a sacred site for their ancestors, which is at probability of becoming desecrated. Burial grounds are most sacred because they are the actual sites where their respected and all-giving ancestors are buried. Native Americans are closely interlinked with land because they see the land as a story of their past and present self. Land has an extremely deep connection to their ancestral value.

Adams, John. "Mont., Wash. Tribes Join Ranchers to Fight Coal Mine." USA Today. 23 September 2013. Web. 7 November 2013. <http://www.usatoday.com>

"Coal and Native American Tribal Lands." Source Watch. 5 July 2012. Web. 7 November 2013. <http://www.sourcewatch.org>