

November 14, 2013

To whom it may concern,

Please accept these scoping comments for the environmental impact statement for the Millennium Bulk Terminal proposal for Longview Wa.

We are four Environmental Studies students, at Gonzaga University in Spokane Washington who will experience direct impact with the proposed coal trains. While performing your EIS we would like you to take into consideration the impact on air quality these trains will have on our environment. We would specifically like you to look at the effect the dust coming off the trains has, the trains and ports themselves, and the consequences that burning the coal in China (and the air traveling back toward the United States) will have on the environment.

Coal dust contributes a lot of toxins into the air including arsenic and mercury. BNSF Railway has said that up to 645 pounds of coal dust can escape from a 400-mile journey. That dust would contribute to massive implications on the health and air quality of the surrounding towns and wildlife. With these toxins in the air, measurable consideration needs to be taken while examining the paths of the coal trains. The health of the people, wildlife and agriculture in the surrounding areas of the trains will be impacted and the impact needs to be included in the EIS.

Coal dust is also generated when bulldozers shift and transport ground up coal at the plants themselves. The coal not only needs constant turnover to keep it in one place, but it needs it to avoid spontaneous combustion as well. Because this dust is very difficult to control and has proven to be a concern among residents at nearby sites, the coal could be moved in left in open fields, where high winds could carry dust for miles. As we know from above, coal dust is incredibly harmful to the environment, and therefore it is imperative that it not be put into our atmosphere.

If this coal terminal is built, the coal dust escaping from the train cars is not the only thing that will negatively affect the surrounding air quality. Because the trains carrying the coal are diesel-burning trains, diesel particles will be released into the air thus increasing air pollution. We will have no choice but to inhale these diesel particles into our lungs and because they are so small they stick to the lung tissue very easily. This eventually leads to pulmonary and cardiovascular issues like cancer, heart disease, and asthma.

Dan Jaffe, Ph.D., tested the amount of diesel exhaust and coal dust escaping from more than 500 trains over the span of one month. He tested air quality levels in a house in North Seattle and at a location in the Columbia River Gorge. For people living near the railroad lines, Dr. Jaffe's data suggests that there is a concern with air quality from diesel exhaust. He says coal trains appear to release some larger particulate matter, which is likely to be coal dust. In conclusion, coal dust has proven to be a main contributor to air pollution, especially in the state of Washington. As college students researching this topic, we are very concerned with the amount of coal dust affecting air quality, which of course results in us not being able to breathe clean air.