

Coal mining causes sufficient harm to humans and the environment, and additional coal mining would only further increase the inevitable harm. This comment touches on three main concerns of coal mining: the environment (including air quality, water quality, and pollution) the daily affected lives of people, and extreme health concerns. Through our findings we have observed that exporting an extreme amount of coal from the US to Asia and constructing the Longview, Cherry Point, and Boardman terminals would cause tremendous harm to humans and the environment.

The deterioration of our natural landscape and the worsening air quality are two negative effects that Coal Mining has on the environment. There are four stages of mining: these are exploration, planning, excavation, and reclamation. The exploration stage disrupts the land and it is not until the restorations period that the ground is once again similar to its natural state. However, in surface mining (there are two types: underground and surface) the structure of the natural landscape is changed permanently. “The change in the resultant topography and infilling of stream headwaters is permanent...” and this permanent change is cause for great concern. Air quality is another negative result from coal mining. It is a safety concern for not only the common people, affecting our visibility as well as the exposure to high levels of dust produced from coal, but also it is a health concern to the miners themselves. Two diseases that have impact on miners are black lung disease (the hardening of the lungs from chronically breathing in mind dust) and silicosis (result from long term inhalation of silica dust from drilling). A solution to these two problems would be to eliminate coal mining and tap into other environmental friendly resources to get energy, such as wind turbines and solar

panels. The use of renewable energy, or clean energy, would be better for the environment and the people, as well as for our future.

The use of coal trains deeply influences the daily lives of people who live along or near the tracks. The trains emit a mass amount of dirt and dust into the air and water, which cause a tremendous amount of health issues, in addition to pollution in towns and cities near the train tracks. Along with the pollution from the train, there also exists a great deal of pollution from machines in the mining process. Heavy-duty machinery is used in obtaining coal. These machines include explosives, draglines, and trucks. The coal is then drilled, fractured and mined. After this process the coal is loaded on to a large truck and conveyor belts where it will be ready for transport. These machines use a great deal of power and emit even more pollution into the environment. These machines release toxins into the air and water. The toxins seep into the earth and water and as a result the environment is permanently damaged from this. Not only is the environment harmed in this process, but also the people living near the area are unable to drink the water and grow plants successfully. The process of transporting coal by trains and the effects of the machinery used to obtain coal is detrimental to the environment as well as the people living in these areas.

Coal mining inevitably affects the quality of water. There are four different types of negative effects caused by coal mining. First, Acid Mine Drainage occurs when acid is carried by rainwater or run-off to nearby streams, rivers or lakes. Second, Heavy Metal Contamination and Leaching occurs when metal comes in contact with water and particles contaminate the water. Third, Processing Chemicals pollution occurs when chemicals used in mining spill or leak into nearby water bodies. Fourth, Erosion and

Sedimentation occurs when sediment contaminates the water. The EPA under the NPDES has issued the Clean Water Act that requires mining companies to have storm-water permits. Another problem with coal mining is caused when the coal dust falls off barges and into the water, which lowers water quality. The effects of coal mining on water quality are very important to the population because clean water is essential to everyday life.

Finally the last issue we found with coal mining is coal sludge. Coal sludge is from washing coal with water and chemicals to remove the excess dirt and rocks (incombustible material) before sending it off to market on trains and boats. Coal slurry can damage and harm essentially every part of the human body. These health problems include but are not limited to: intense lesions, neuropathy, kidney/liver failure, multiple types of cancer, high blood pressure, brittle bones, and miscarriages/birth defects. These health defects are because of the seemingly endless amounts chemicals the coal is washed with. Coal plants produce thousands of gallons of coal slurry every day, as long as there is a need for coal there will be damaging coal slurries. Most coal slurries are dumped in above ground, massive toxic lakes, called impoundments. Often times these lakes break causing massive toxic floods to nearby towns or clean water supplies. If the slurries are not dumped above ground they are poured into into old mines until they are completely filled. By doing this, the water often times leaks into the ground water contaminating the clean supply to the areas citizens. These slurries can be dried up during the process instead of simply neglectfully poured away, but elevated costs of this safer process keep companies away from this method. Furthermore, if coal plants were to be forced to clean

their entire slurry pits at once, they would have a high probability of shutting down because of the high cost.

The detrimental effects of coal mining are interminable, and need to stop. Our environment is suffering beyond anyone's predictable fear. Every citizen's life is immediately affected, and will pay because of coal mining. And finally, the health concerns are unfortunately predestined. Thus, our support is strongly behind the decision to not construct the Longview, Cherry Point, and Boardman terminals, for the environmental, life of our citizens, and health of the common people are far too important.