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To Whom It May Concern:

Please scope the impacts on student learning, as created by health problems from diesel particulates caused by increased rail traffic from the proposed Longview Terminal. As an educator and parent, I am very concerned about the additional rail traffic, both proximity to family homes and schools, existing tracks and proposed 'new' tracks in the county and state. Many of the children I work with have learning disabilities, health impairments, mental health issues and asthma. I want to know what impact diesel particulates, as related to student learning, will have on my child and all children in the communities along the proposed or foreseeable rail routes between the Powder River Basin and West Coast. I believe that school district leaders, educators, families, and students should know what risks the increased rail traffic has on student learning and student ability to meet state testing standards, both students' already at-risk and otherwise 'healthy' students. I believe it is essential to study the health impacts from increased diesel particulates as related to increased days of school missed due to illness. This study should be comprehensive in range from the first year through to when the trains and terminal(s) is in full operation; year 5, year 20, etc.

The following areas of research are important to consider:

1. Potential health impacts, as compiled by Whatcom Docs, such as impaired pulmonary development in adolescents; increased cardiopulmonary mortality and all-cause mortality; measurable pulmonary inflammation; increased severity and frequency of asthma attacks, ER visits, and hospital admissions in children from diesel particulates. Reference: Statement of the Whatcom Docs organization (<http://www.coaltrainfacts.org/whatcom-docs-positionstatement-and-appendices>) and referenced research.
2. Potential effects on student learning due to asthma. "Asthma accounts for more school absenteeism than any other chronic disease, and 60% of students with asthma miss school annually due to respiratory symptoms.^{4,5} Prolonged absence or multiple brief absences from school may contribute significantly to negative school performance.⁶ Children with chronic health impairments are often confronted with educational difficulties and disruption resulting from excessive and frequent absences.⁷ Increased absenteeism interrupts learning processes and interferes with the child's peer acceptance and participation in extracurricular activities." <http://www.asthma-stlouis.org/PDF/AsthmaStatusSeverity.pdf>

I would ask that you to review and include in your scope known studies and conduct additional studies as needed to quantify impacts with certainty. Best available research should be utilized.

The effect on our children's health and schooling is a very serious matter and should be given priority in considering this project.

Because of the numbers of children exposed along all rail corridors, the cumulative increase in rail traffic will have a significant impact on human health. The Environmental Impact Statement must include not only coal transport, but also the impacts from all other freight and passenger trains both now and in the foreseeable future. Please include in this scope all anticipated increases in rail traffic, including any increase from the expansion of the Westshore and Ridley Terminals in B.C., GPT, Lonview, etc.

The EIS should measure the cost of increased school services to meet student learning needs due to missed school days, increased school health and nursing needs, remedial programs, and testing needs. The EIS should measure a dollar equivalent for these services with direct and indirect costs. The EIS should measure the loss to school districts in Longview and all of Washington State, due to families who will be unwilling to move into school districts or move out of school districts due to the perception of being located in a injurious area due to rail traffic. The EIS should also measure the costs to school districts for the increase in inability to meet national and state testing standards. As well, the EIS should measure the cost of increased nursing support; and, should measure the costs for allocating FTE support for students needing home assistance. All relevant incurred costs should be reviewed with an allocated dollar amount for future mitigation efforts.

Potential mitigations for the preceding concerns might include, increasing funding for school districts to meet student needs due to lost school days, increase nursing needs and decreased test scores, relocating families and schools along the rail corridor to less injurious localities. The actual effects from diesel particulates for those who remain adjacent to the tracks may be beyond mitigation.

Viable alternatives to a coal terminal, which in turn increases rail traffic, could be energy production based on energy independent technologies such as windmill farms, geothermal, and or solar energy plants on the industrial land with the intention of clean renewable jobs with revenue and no health risks. Other non-toxic and non-injurious industries to our children involving producing local products and local distribution would have a far greater benefit to the community and economic development of Longview other than a coal terminal.

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