November 18, 2013

Millennium Bulk Terminals EIS
c/o ICF INTERNATIONAL
710 Second Avenue, Suite 550
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Scoping Comments on the Millenium Bulk Terminals-Longview, LLC SEPA/NEPA EIS

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to participate in the scoping process and comment on your Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Millennium Bulk Terminals-Longview, LLC (MBTL) is proposing to construct and operate a marine terminal for export of coal in Cowlitz County, Washington. The Cowlitz County Department of Building and Planning, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Washington State Department of Ecology entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to work cooperatively as Co-Lead Agencies for the completion of a combined NEPA/SEPA Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is required for this project. It is our understanding that the MBTL proposal is for a facility that would ultimately have the capacity to handle 44 million metric tons of coal annually.

These comments are provided on behalf of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The NMFS is responsible for stewardship of the Nation's living marine resources and their habitats within the United States' Exclusive Economic Zone. Our mandates and authorities are derived from numerous statutes, most significantly the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The NMFS will also consult with tribes affected by this project as part of our federal treaty trust responsibilities. Under the ESA, the NMFS will consult with the Army Corps of Engineers, State of Washington Department of Ecology, and Cowlitz County (collectively referred to as the Co-Lead Agencies) for the species and critical habitats identified in Table 1. In addition, the NMFS will conduct an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation with the Co-Lead Agencies for 46 groundfish, four coastal pelagic species, and three Pacific salmon species (Table 2). The NMFS will also assist the Co-Lead Agencies in acquiring an Incidental Take Authorization through the MMPA for marine mammal species that frequent the lower Columbia River and marine waters within the EEZ that could be affected by shipping traffic associated with the project. Several of the marine mammal species that may be found within the EEZ in coordination with the shipping lane are also listed as endangered under the ESA (southern resident DPS of the killer whale, and the humpback, blue, fin, sei, and sperm whales) and effects of shipping-associated vessel strikes will also be considered in consultation.

Table 1. Federal Register notices for final rules that list threatened and endangered species, designate CHs, or apply protective regulations to listed species considered in this consultation.

Species /ESU or DPS	Listing Status Last Reaffirmed	Critical Habitat	Protective Regulations
Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)			
Lower Columbia River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	06//28/05; 70 FR 37160
Upper Willamette River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	06//28/05; 70 FR 37160
Upper Columbia River spring-run	E; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	ESA section 9 applies
Snake River spring/summer run	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	10/25/99; 64 FR 57399	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
Snake River fall-run	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	12/28/93; 58 FR 68543	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
Chum salmon *(O. keta)*			
Columbia River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
Coho salmon (*O. kisutch*)			
Lower Columbia River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	Proposed 1/14/2013: 78FR 2726	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
Sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*)			
Snake River	E; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	12/28/93; 58 FR 68543	ESA section 9 applies
Steelhead (*O. mykiss*)			
Lower Columbia River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
Upper Willamette River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
Middle Columbia River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
Upper Columbia River	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	02/01/06; 71 FR 5178
Snake River Basin	T; 08/15/11; 76 FR 50448	09/02/05; 70 FR 52630	06/28/05; 70 FR 37160
North American Green Sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*)			
Southern DPS	T; 04/07/06; 71 FR 17757	10/09/09; 74 FR 52300	06/02/10; 74 FR 30714
Pacific eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus)*			
Southern DPS	T; 03/18/10; 75 FR 13012	10/20/11; 76 FR 65324	Not applicable
Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea)*			
NA	06/02/1970 35 FR 8491 Endangered	01/05/2010 75 FR 319 Proposed Revision	Under Development

Table 2. Species of fishes found in area potentially affected by project actions with designated EFH.

Groundfish Species	redstripe rockfish S. proriger	Dover sole Microstomus pacificus
spiny dogfish Squalus acanthias	rosethorn rockfish S. helvomaculatus	English sole Parophrys vetulus
big skate Raja binoculata	rosy rockfish S. rosaceus	flathead sole Hippoglossoides elassodon
California skate Raja inornata	rougheye rockfish S. aleutianus	petrale sole Eopsetta jordani
Longnose skate Raja rhina	sharpchin rockfish S. zacentrus	rex sole Glyptocephalus zachirus
ratfish Hydrolagus colliei	splitnose rockfish S. diploproa	rock sole Lepidopsetta bilineata
Pacific cod Gadus macrocephalus	striptail rockfish S. saxicola	sand sole Psettichthys melanostictus
Pacific whiting (hake) Merluccius productus	tiger rockfish S. nigrocinctus	starry flounder Platichthys stellatus
black rockfish Sebastes melanops	vermilion rockfish S. miniatus	arrowtooth flounder Atheresthes stomias
bocaccio S. paucispinis	yelloweye rockfish S. ruberrimus	
brown rockfish S. auriculatus	yellowtail rockfish S. flavidus	**Coastal Pelagic Species**
canary rockfish S. pinniger	shortspine thornyhead Sebastolobus alascanus	anchovy Engraulis mordax
China rockfish S. nebulosus	cabezon Scorpaenichthys marmoratus	Pacific sardine Sardinops sagax
copper rockfish S. caurinus	lingcod Ophiodon elongatus	Pacific mackerel Scomber japonicus
darkblotch rockfish S. crameri	kelp greenling Hexagrammos decagrammus	market squid Loligo opalescens
Greenstriped rockfish S. elongatus	sablefish Anoplopoma fimbria	**Pacific Salmon Species**
Pacific ocean perch S. alutus	Pacific sanddab Citharichthys sordidus	Chinook salmon Oncorhychus tshawytscha
quillback rockfish S. maliger	butter sole Isopsetta isolepis	coho salmon O. kisutch
redbanded rockfish S. babcocki	curlfin sole Pleuronichthys decurrens	Puget Sound pink salmon O. gorbuscha

The ESA requires NMFS to evaluate the potential of all construction and future operation of the proposed terminal, as well as all interrelated and interdependent actions which are reasonably certain to occur including effects from transportation of products. The NMFS will also evaluate indirect and cumulative effects that potentially affect the species listed above from activities that are reasonably certain to occur.

To meet the requirements of the ESA, MSA, and MMPA, the COE intends to conduct interagency consultations with NMFS regarding all species listed above. For a complete evaluation, NMFS requires adequate information on relevant changes to the environmental

baseline which could have potential effects to protected species and their habitat. The EIS and biological assessment should include an accurate and thorough description of the environmental baseline, a complete description of all parts of the action, and details on how those actions affect the existing environmental baseline. The environmental baseline describes the condition of the environment prior to construction and future operation of the project[1]. It is our understanding that MBTL is gathering physical and biological baseline data and information of the project site where pier construction will take place, as well as the interrelated rail line and storage areas needed for the operation. The proposed project is reasonably certain to create additional activities that will impact the environment further than the project location in Longview and these should also be considered.

The pier and associated facilities at Longview are being built to facilitate shipment of a bulk commodity overseas. The pier facilitates the larger action, which is the transportation of the product from the source to their customers overseas. The construction and operation of the pier and facilities at MBTL depends on the transportation of these products. Therefore, the effects from transportation of the products are considered interrelated actions and require analysis under section 7 of the ESA. Transportation of the products includes vessel and rail traffic. The NMFS therefore requests information on rail-line and shipping transportation corridors including routes and number of crossings from the pier to the edge of the EEZ. The effects of increased vessel traffic include vessel strikes with marine mammals and sea turtles, prop wash, vessel noise to marine organisms, and vessel wakes. Vessel wakes have been demonstrated to cause take in the lower Columbia River by stranding fish, and may potentially alter aquatic and riparian vegetation growth and/or cause shoreline erosion. In addition, construction of the facility will generate potentially harmful underwater noise from pile driving, alterations to the benthic community from dredging, and alterations to water quality.

The construction and operation of the new facilities will increase rail traffic throughout the western United States as coal is transported to the facility. The rail line routes along which coal will be transported parallel major portions of the Columbia River where numerous ESA-listed salmonids live, and they also cross numerous tributaries that support specific spawning populations of salmon, steelhead and eulachon essential to the recovery of Columbia River stocks. The JARPA submitted for the project provides no information on product delivery operations to the Longview site. Thus, please include information on the train routes and the anticipated number of crossings per day. Studies have also demonstrated that tons of fugitive coal dust may be released during intermodal transfer and transport. In recognition of this potential effect, please include proposed conservation measures to reduce wind drift and analyses that support these estimates.

The NMFS recognizes climate change as a threat to the health of our oceans and our marine living resources. The transportation of coal also facilitates its e consumption, which increases carbon emissions that contribute to changes in weather patterns, warmer waters, and ocean acidification; all of which have measurable effects on protected species and their habitat. In

[1] The legal definition (non-plain language definition) of the "environmental baseline" includes the past and present impacts of all Federal, state, or private actions and other human activities in the action area, the anticipated impacts of all proposed Federal projects in the action area that have already undergone formal or early section 7 consultation, and the impact of state or private actions which are contemporaneous with the consultation in process (50 CFR 402.02).

order to fully understand the effects of the project to marine species and habitats, please provide an estimate of the carbon output of burning the maximum capacity of coal shipped overseas. As coal may contain associated metal and metalloid contaminants, the burning of coal and fugitive coal dust can liberate metals to the atmosphere that ultimately conveys to waters that support protected species and their habitats. An analysis of the expected chemical composition of the coal source(s) to be conveyed to the Longview facility is therefore also requested.

The NMFS recognizes adverse environmental impacts to fish and wildlife species and their supportive habitats may be unavoidable from permitted project actions and that these impacts must be considered in the SEPA/NEPA process. NMFS also recognizes that the proposed project will have environmental effects beyond the footprint of facilities being built and their operational platforms. Through the NEPA process, MBTL should propose alternatives that reduce adverse environmental effects, considering the range of the impacts of the action, including but not limited to fugitive coal dust, vessel strikes to marine mammals, and vessel wake stranding, and incorporating transportation analyses from the commodity source to the EEZ in the transportation corridor. Considering the extent of the action and the potential for fish bearing aquatic habitat to become the sink of fugitive dust, the applicant should establish baseline conditions and monitor relevant conditions to determine if minimization methods to reduce drift are working effectively. If drift suppression is not meeting performance expectations, the applicant should have a contingency plan to either fix errors or stop shipment of the product until the issues are resolved.

The NMFS will continue to work with you throughout the EIS process, and consultations through the various laws and regulations under our purview. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter or NMFS' involvement with this subject, please contact Dr. Jeff Fisher, Lower Columbia/Washington Coast Branch Chief of the NOAA-NMFS Oregon-Washington Coastal Area Office at (360) 534-9342, or by electronic mail at jeff.fisher@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

(for) Kim Kratz, PhD.
Assistant Regional Administrator
Oregon/Washington Coastal Area
NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region
U.S. Department of Commerce

cc: comments@millenniumbulkeiswa.gov