Executive Correspondence

Log No: 8432 | **Gov Log No:** None

Date Assigned: 10/21/2013 **Date Due:** 11/04/2013 **Date Completed:**

Constituent: Anders Ibsen-City of Tacoma Council Member

Subject: Millennium Bulk Terminals

Assigned to: Toteff, Sally

Organization: SWRO Dir

Coordinate With: None Required

Signature Required: REGIONAL DIRECTOR

CC (To be noted on letter)

Not Required

Contact Person	In	Out
Greenfield, Jennifer		

Phone Log (If Appropriate)

Comments:

No comments at this time

RECEIVED

OCT 21 2013

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

City of Tacoma

Council Member Anders Ibsen

October 16, 2013

Maia Bellon
Director, Washington Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504

Brigadier General John R. McMahon
Commander, NW Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
PO Box 2870
Portland, OR 97208-2870

ICF International
710 Second Ave, Ste 550
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, WA Department of Ecology, and Cowlitz County Commission,

RE: Docket number 2013-19738: Comment on scope of EIS for Millennium Bulk Terminals Longview LLC Coal Export Terminal

As a member of the Tacoma City Council I have been closely observing the various proposals to export coal from ports in Washington and Oregon. I have particular and specific concerns about the impacts to Tacoma of the coal terminals proposed by Millennium Bulk Logistics and Pacific International Terminals at Longview and Cherry Point, Washington, respectively.

Although I understand that the Port of Tacoma is not currently considering exporting coal, the impacts of transporting coal through the region and through Tacoma will affect our city in many ways that concern me as an elected representative. As a member of the Tacoma City Council I support rail as a key economic driver of the city and our region and recognize the benefits from continued investments in our rail system. However, the substantial increase in coal rail traffic required by these proposals is unique and will create specific and significant adverse impacts on Tacoma that need to be evaluated in the review of these projects. Specific adverse impacts on Tacoma from these proposals include the following:

Traffic Congestion

Coal trains coming through Tacoma on their way to Cherry Point, and the potential for empty coal trains coming through on their way back to the Powder River Basin from Cherry Point, Longview, or other coal export terminals, will slow traffic

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at key crossings throughout Tacoma and the region. Before any proposal is permitted, the cumulative impacts to traffic in Tacoma must be understood and addressed, including, but not limited to: increased wait times at crossings, air quality concerns due to increased idling of cars at crossings, public safety access for emergency responders, and economic impacts relating to business access.

Rail Congestion

The Port of Tacoma is a major economic driver for the City of Tacoma and surrounding Pierce County. Consequently, reliable rail and road transportation to and from the Port is critically important to the success of the Port and the economic health of our region. A key question that must be understood before any coal export project is permitted is how existing rail users would all be affected to the extent that coal exports crowd out other uses of our existing rail capacity.

Property Values and Waterfront Development

Because of the number and nature of the trains required to service these coal export proposals, I have serious concerns about the impact to property values along the rail route, specifically from Titlow Park along Ruston Way, the Schuster Corridor and the Thea Foss Waterway. The cumulative impact to residential and commercial property values and the associated tax revenue on which public budgets rely must be addressed in any analysis of the proposed projects. Additionally, Tacoma is investing heavily in our waterfront as a destination location for dining, shopping, recreation, and tourism. I am concerned how noise, air pollution, vibration, ingress and egress delays, and other impacts might affect the viability of our waterfront.

Air Quality

I am concerned about the significant public health and economic impact of reduced air quality. Pierce County is currently out of Attainment for Particulate Matter 2.5 emissions. An increase in diesel-powered coal trains of this type and magnitude will have a negative impact on our air quality and the PM 2.5 problem, through increased diesel emissions, fugitive coal dust, and vehicle idling due to traffic issues resulting from the coal train traffic. I understand the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency is currently appealing to the EPA with their plan to get Pierce County out of non-attainment and I am extremely concerned about the adverse effect this will have on our progress towards this goal.

Water Quality

The health of Puget Sound and Commencement Bay is important to Tacoma residents. Coal cars are currently uncovered, resulting in significant emissions of coal during travel. I understand that several studies have confirmed that these coal emissions can go into waterways, including creeks and rivers crossed by the trains and the Sound. The direct and cumulative impacts of the increased coal train traffic relating to the Millennium and Pacific International projects need to be fully addressed in the environmental review for these projects.

City of Tacoma

Council Member Anders Ibsen

Climate Change and Ocean Acidification

The City of Tacoma is a frontline community experiencing the impacts of greenhouse gas pollution via climate change and ocean acidification. Just because the proposal is to ship coal to then be burnt in Asia does not mean the impacts won't be felt in communities throughout Washington – in fact, we will face real and dramatic adverse impacts in Tacoma from climate change. These impacts include sea level rise, public health concerns and increased mortality, reduced snow pack and water retention for the City's reservoirs, habitat loss, and many other issues. In addition, the City is very concerned about the impact of ocean acidification on Puget Sound and other waterways. The City has an aggressive Climate Action Plan to reduce the city's carbon footprint, and I have serious concerns about any proposal that could significantly facilitate the development of fossil fuel infrastructure and contribute to global warming. Additionally, the acidification of the planet's oceans due to increased carbon pollution is a serious danger to the Northwest's fishing economy and is a threat to the health of Puget Sound. The health of the Tacoma economy and quality of life in Tacoma are tied to the health of Puget Sound and any threat to the Sound is a threat to Tacoma. Our Port, public infrastructure, communities near the Shoreline and fishing/shellfish industries will be dramatically impacted by these proposals and we need those impacts to be thoroughly understood.

Thank you for your attention to these comments. Based on the overwhelming evidence of significant adverse impacts on Tacoma, other Washington communities, and the globe, I urge you to reject these projects. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Anders Ibsen, Council Member, District 1

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