

1700 Fowler St.
Mount Vernon, WA 98274
Sept. 12, 2013

ATTENTION: MARGO THOMPSON & ANYA CAUDILL
Department of Ecology, Olympia, WA

Regarding: Rule and State Implementation Plan Concerning Air Quality

In Mount Vernon, the number of coal and oil tanker trains heading to Bellingham and Canada destinations have already increased significantly which has caused our air quality to diminish significantly.

Both coal and oil are considered high carbon risk in air pollution and very dangerous for the lungs are the diesel particulates released into the air by the engines pulling the rail cars. Not to be forgotten is the coal dust which means that coal dust and diesel particulates are released into the air for the entire route these trains take from start to destination. The effects are felt through all cities and the country side along the way in air pollution and traffic congestion.

In the specific case of Mount Vernon, the trains are causing long lines of idling cars, trucks, buses, while the trains pass by - often 150 or more rail cars long. The tracks go right through our city center at the busiest intersection of the city. This particular crossing, it should be noted, is the worst in the city - badly in need of repair which Burlington Northern has ignored.

Residents of Mount Vernon packed McIntyre Hall during the scoping process protesting the building of the Gateway Pacific Terminal in Bellingham.

With the terminal's approval, we are to expect 18 to 23 coal trains per day through Mount Vernon - total lunacy for downtown businesses, (some already closed). Questionable backers of the terminal cite exaggerated creation of jobs. More jobs may occur for the building of the terminal but far less permanent jobs, (also depending upon who they hire, local or otherwise).

Trading health of people and the environmental health of the Pacific Northwest for jobs is not a bargain. It is my hope and expectation that Ecology will see the great health risks ongoing right now with this project and also recognize the sacrifice of the Skagit Valley serenity of the agricultural and tulip industries. These industries have brought millions of dollars in economic benefit to the area, (to include tourism). This beautiful valley must not become a railway center. Even at this present time, there are oil tanker cars parked on tracks throughout Mount Vernon - a real eyesore and environmental risk.

The question must then be asked and answered:
What monetary and health benefits are our many communities in WA State deriving from huge corporations exploitation of the Pacific Northwest - strictly for their profit??

Concerned,

Toni Deamed

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P.S. I am enclosing a copy of an article, dated 9-04-13 from the Cascadia Weekly. Please take the time to read this article and if you want real detailed information about coal or oil happenings, view the articles of this fact finding weekly paper on your computer.