

To:

Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Currently there are six coal export terminal proposals pending in the Washington and Oregon slated to export approximately 157 million tons of coal annually. Moving 157 million tons of coal from the coal fields of Montana and Wyoming through the Columbia River Gorge for shipment will have significant economic, community, environmental and transportation impacts to Washington and Oregon.

Currently each proposal is being evaluated and permitted individually without comprehensive consideration of the cumulative benefits and impacts of all the coal export terminals on Washington State and our individual communities. It is our opinion that the cumulative, long term impact of the operation of these facilities should be evaluated, studied and considered prior to as a part of the decision making process.

To that end, we respectfully request that a federal agency prepare a programmatic and comprehensive environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act to look at the unprecedented number of coal export proposals pending in the Pacific Northwest. Currently, the United States annually exports between 80-100 million tons of coal from all ports in the United States. The current proposals for coal export facilities could result in an additional 157 million tons of coal exports, more than doubling the U.S. coal export capacity.

Most of the economic, community, environmental and transportation impacts associated with this tremendous increase in coal export would be shouldered by Washington and Oregon. It is imperative that the federal government take seriously the responsibility to make informed decisions and that there be a comprehensive look at the energy, environmental and public health impacts of these proposals before our cities and counties commit to this path.

The impacts from the transport of coal through Washington and its communities would be significant. Areas of concern that merit a hard look, at a minimum include:

- Increased vessel traffic on the Columbia River, including navigational and maritime safety concerns (*the proposals could result in a 70% increase in ship traffic in the Columbia River*)
- Protection of water quality, including increased risk of spills
- Impacts to listed anadromous fish species
- Coal dust emissions at the facilities and during product transport
- Emissions of other air pollutants, including diesel particulate, ozone, mercury and greenhouse gases and

- Increased rail traffic noise, and delay times for communities along the proposed rail lines, including emergency vehicles at rail crossings (*as many as 63 trains per day could significantly affect the transport of other export commodities and negatively impact plans to increase passenger rail*)

We strongly urge an immediate commitment to evaluating the impacts of these projects through a comprehensive, programmatic Environmental Impact Statement that examines both the cumulative effects of coal transport to the West Coast.

City of Longview