

Will Pierce County power past coal?

COAL COMPANIES, seeing little future growth domestically, have a new plan: strip mine coal in Montana and Wyoming, transport it on long coal trains through Pierce County to a massive coal export terminal north of Bellingham at Cherry Point. They plan to haul up to 48 metric tons of coal each year. There are two other proposals in WA and OR to export coal to Asia.

WHO'S BEHIND THE PLAN?

Out-of-state companies, including the world's largest coal company Peabody Energy and investors including Goldman Sachs. SSA Marine would manage the port.

CONGESTION FROM COAL TRAIN TRAFFIC

Communities in and along rail lines in Pierce County communities in and along the rail-line including, Dupont, Steilacoom, University Place, Ruston, Tacoma, Puyallup and Sumner could see up to 18 coal trains rolling through town every day. And the trains would border the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge. This would add more than 3,000 noisy mile-long loaded coal trains traveling through Pierce County rail system every year.

A single slow-moving coal train can obstruct a rail crossing by six minutes or more. Adding just 18 trains to the local area's rail system would mean blocking some crossings by two hours per day.

Increased traffic delays at busy rail crossings would clog commuter traffic and could slow response times for emergency responders.

WATERFRONTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS CUT OFF BY COAL TRAINS

Added coal train traffic along the Pierce County rail line would limit access to neighborhoods, schools, and the small downtowns close to the train tracks. This could drive

away investors for new residential, retail and commercial developments in rail-adjacent communities in Pierce County.

HEALTH IMPACTS FOR PIERCE COUNTY

Diesel exhaust and coal dust from coal trains can cause serious long-term health problems like lung and heart disease and cancer.

Diesel exhaust is associated with asthma, cardiopulmonary disease and increased incidences of cancer. Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad studies estimate up to 500 pounds of coal can be lost in the form of dust from each rail car en route. The wide ranging health dangers of coal dust include exposure to toxic heavy metals like mercury and increased rates of asthma, especially in children. Coal dust could pollute our clean air and water.

Toxic fish: Mercury and other pollutants from coal-burning power plants travel from

(cont)



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PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL K. ANDERSON



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PHOTO CREDIT: SIERRA CLUB.

“The concern expressed by mayors and governors and the leaders of community, medical and faith groups cuts across any debate about the potential boost to local employment and economies.

They believe there are too many unknown details about the extent of the port-development plans, along with the eventual scale of the coal deliveries through cities and towns, and the potential local and global hazards to human health and the environment.”

— SEATTLE TIMES EDITORIAL
OCTOBER 2, 2012

Asia to the West Coast of North America where they poison our air, water, fish and food supply.

IMPACTS TO PUGET SOUND

Constructing the proposed Cherry Point terminal would destroy and degrade 162 acres of wetlands while allowing coal dust to blow directly on herring spawning grounds. Herring are a primary food source for Chinook salmon, themselves the primary food source of Southern Resident orcas.

The companies would ship the coal on massive cargo ships. Every year close to 500 some of the world’s biggest cargo ships would navigate our waterways and the already-crowded Straits of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound. This would mean ongoing threats to local communities, fishing grounds, wetlands, waterways and wildlife. Just one accident would be devastating This would mean ongoing threats to wetlands, waterways and wildlife from potential ship collisions, threatening salmon, orcas and our Sound.

Exporting coal promotes deeper global fossil fuel dependence. It delays the urgently needed transition to cleaner alternatives. It makes climate disruption inevitable,

including extreme flooding and ocean acidification, impacting our shorelines and the Sound.

BAD FOR THE ECONOMY

Major public ports, such as the Ports of Seattle, Tacoma, Vancouver and Portland have rejected coal export as inconsistent with their economic development strategies. The proposed sites have potential for hundreds of jobs in light industrial and smart-tech growth instead of being mired in a single-commodity, unpredictable dirty export trade. Increased coal train traffic would lower property values along the rail lines and in communities impacted by congested traffic. It would also make it more difficult for ports and shippers to get higher value goods to market along the rail lines.

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WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- 1** Call Senators Cantwell and Murray and tell them they need to demand an area-wide environmental impact statement that assesses the cumulative impacts from all four proposed coal export terminals in WA and OR. Congressional Switchboard: 202-224-3121.
- 2** Call WA State Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark at 360-902-1004 and tell him “please don’t use Washington’s public waters for coal export.”
- 3** Call your state legislators and tell them to do everything in their power to stop call export. Hotline: 800.562.6000

POWER PAST COAL

communities against coal export

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