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Fast-tracking bill fails to advance in WA State Legislature

SB 5805 drew huge grassroots opposition; would have fast-tracked Pit to Pier and coal export projects

OLYMPIA, Wash. – A bill that would have fast-tracked mega-projects from gravel mines to coal export facilities (SB 5805) in Washington appears derailed for now in the State Legislature after it failed to advance before a key cutoff today.

“SB 5805 would have fundamentally altered our land, air and water by fast-tracking major industrial projects that could fundamentally alter our Puget Sound, our environment and our communities. Washingtonians demonstrated overwhelming opposition to this bill because they want and deserve a full and thorough review process when it affects their community and the environment,” said Hilary Franz, Executive Director of Futurewise.

“That this bill failed to advance is a testament to the power of the people and the diverse voices speaking up against coal export,” said Beth Doglio, Executive Director of the Power Past Coal Coalition, an ever-growing alliance opposed to coal export off the West Coast. “When communities and local leaders realized that this legislation would have silenced their voices on projects that had big impacts on their communities, they spoke up – loudly and quickly. We will continue to watch this issue closely between now and the end of the legislative session.”

SB 5805 would have changed a little-used provision of state law to expedite the review and permitting for projects of statewide significance. Currently, for a project to be designated as a project of statewide significance, it has to at least provide a net environmental benefit and be supported by the local city or county government. SB 5805 would have removed both of these requirements and allowed fast-track permitting for mega-projects like coal export facilities in Bellingham and Longview and the Pit-to-Pier gravel mine on Hood Canal.

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