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**Groups Petition Army Corps to Undertake Area-Wide Environmental Impact Statement on All Proposed Coal Export Terminals in WA and OR**

*Elected Officials, Municipalities, Health Officials, Businesses, and Residents from Montana to China*

*Join Call for Full Assessment of Impacts*

On Wednesday, Northwest-based community groups, health professionals, environmental organizations, a grassroots conservation and family agriculture group, and a clean-energy nonprofit filed a [formal petition](#) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asking it to evaluate the cumulative and related impacts of all proposed coal export terminals in Oregon and Washington. There are currently three active coal export proposals in Washington and Oregon at Cherry Point, WA (north of Bellingham), Longview, WA, and Boardman, OR that would export a total 100 million metric tons per year if all built. Formally submitted by Earthjustice, the petitioners ask the Army Corps to conduct a single, comprehensive, area-wide environmental impact statement (“EIS”) under its National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) authority.

“The threats from these coal export proposals connect communities across the region and cannot be overlooked,” stated Cesia Kearns, Senior Campaign Representative for Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal Campaign and Acting Director for Power Past Coal coalition of which Sierra Club is a member. “We have been calling for an area-wide EIS for over a year; it’s time for the Army Corps to stop sitting on its hands.”

Climate Solutions, Columbia Riverkeeper, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Greenpeace, National Wildlife Federation, Northern Plains Resource Council, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, RE Sources, Sierra Club, Washington Environmental Council, and Western Organization of Resource Councils submitted the petition. The groups call on the Army Corps to consider those environmental and health impacts of the various coal export terminal proposals that are cumulative, related, and/or similar. Over 500 businesses, 160 elected officials, including both Governors Kitzhaber and Inslee and ten members of Congress, three dozen municipalities, over 100 organizations, and over a dozen newspapers, including the region’s largest *The Seattle Times*, have called for a full and thorough review of the proposed terminals. At least 35,000 citizens wrote to the Army Corps calling for an area-wide EIS.

“Spokane, WA is hundreds of miles away from the proposed terminals yet we are ground zero for coal trains,” said Ben Stuckart, Spokane, WA City Council President. “If all of the proposed coal terminals

were built, Spokane could see 40 mile-and-a-half long coal trains – empty and full -- rolling through town every day. Our air quality would suffer, traffic for commuters and truckers would get worse, and taxpayers could wind up paying millions of dollars for new infrastructure. We can't just draw a circle around the proposed terminals and study the on-site effects. We need to look at impacts and costs to communities all along the rail-line and also consider the bigger picture like how burning all that coal would worsen climate change.”

In the fall of 2012, the Army Corps, WA Dept. of Ecology, and Whatcom County Council conducted EIS scoping hearings in Washington for the proposed Cherry Point coal export terminal. However, they did not hold any hearings in Montana or Idaho despite rail-line communities in those states being threatened with significant increases in coal-train traffic if the terminal was built. The petition to the Corps asks for the area-wide EIS to include impacts from increased mining in Wyoming and Montana, particularly on public lands; increased rail traffic throughout Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon; and the effect of coal export on domestic energy security and pricing. The petition also asks for hearings to be held around the region.

“These ports, if approved, would have tremendous impact on the Helena, MT community. Coal mined in the Powder River Basin, primarily Wyoming, would travel through Helena on the way to these ports and would dramatically increase the volume of coal train traffic in our community,” said Mary Ann Mackay, Helena, MT resident. “This additional train traffic would further stress our aging infrastructure and increase air pollution from diesel fumes and coal dust. A comprehensive review of these impacts is the only way that we can ensure that our community can plan adequately for resolving the impacts from the increase in coal train traffic and ensure that Helena citizens would not be left footing the bill for necessary upgrades.”

Over 600 health professionals have either come out against or raised deep concern and caution over the proposed terminals, calling attention to the threat of increased coal train traffic that would result in more congestion, health impacts, and more mercury, diesel, and carbon pollution. Many have officially called for an area-wide Environmental Impact Statement and comprehensive Health Impact Assessment.

"Coal is the dirtiest and most dangerous fossil fuel. The production, transport, and combustion of coal is harmful to its workers and to everyone else along the line, from the mines, to the trains, to the barges, to the ports and beyond," stated Dr. Susan Katz of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility. "The Army Corps of Engineers must ensure that the right questions are asked before serious harm is done to the health of our families and our environment."

Other issues that groups ask the Army Corps to consider in an area-wide EIS include: traffic, pollution, safety, health, and congestion issues along the rail line between Powder River Basin area coal mines and the Pacific Northwest terminal sites.

“I live and farm along an ‘alternate’ rail line that would likely experience direct and indirect impacts if coal export is permitted from the Pacific Northwest,” said Nicole Brown, owner of Moondance Farm in Acme, WA. “Since these impacts are removed in distance and time from the proposed terminals, an area-wide EIS should be required to ensure fair treatment of all potentially impacted communities.”

The groups also want the Army Corps to look at the effects of significantly increased barge and cargo ship operations on the Columbia River and in Puget Sound and combined vessel traffic impacts and oil spill risks in the transpacific navigational routes including the Gulf of Alaska and Unimak Pass.

“The town of Longview would see the impacts from all the proposed coal exports projects: a terminal in our community, another one across the river, plus all the coal trains traveling through up to Cherry Point. The Corps must evaluate all of the proposals together, not with blinders on,” said Gayle Kiser, a local resident that supports the groups’ formal petition and the President of Landowners and Citizens for a Safe Community.

Courts have agreed that a single EIS is required for multiple discreet actions under some circumstances, for example, when the projects have common timing, geography, and/or impacts. The Army Corps has not yet required a site-specific EIS at the Port of Morrow terminal at Boardman, and permit approvals there may go forward after an even more truncated environmental analysis.

“Given the magnitude of the coal export proposals, over 100 million tons per year and the impact to the Columbia Gorge, it is imperative that the Army Corps conduct an area-wide Environmental Impact Statement. Cities and towns in the Columbia Gorge are concerned about many aspects of these proposals, including coal pollution, degraded quality of life, increased fire danger, and emergency response to coal derailments. This is the best way for these concerns to be addressed,” stated Kate McBride, City Council Member, Hood River, OR.

The groups also called on the Corps to consider effects on global consumption of coal due to the effect of the operation of export terminals on international market prices, and resulting increased greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution impacts from coal combustion in China, including mercury and other contaminant deposition in Pacific Northwest waters.

"If America plans to subsidize coal exports, it would have a real impact on China. It is important that the Army Corps conduct a study that accounts for all of the impacts of Northwest coal exports--and that includes us," said Hao Xin, Executive Director, Green Zhejiang, Hangzhou Eco-Culture Association, Green More, Xiacheng Dist., Hangzhou, China.

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POWER PAST COAL is an ever-growing alliance of health, environmental, businesses, clean-energy, faith and community groups working to stop coal export off the West Coast. Visit [PowerPastCoal.org](http://PowerPastCoal.org) for more information.