Beginning on September 17 in Longview, Northwesterners will have our first chance to express our concerns and opposition about the coal industry’s plan to ship dirty coal through Washington and Oregon towns to a proposed coal export terminal in Longview. This will be our opportunity to raise our issues about the full scale of the Longview project in public meetings called “Scoping” hearings.

THE SCOOP ON “SCOPING” AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS

The final product of the state and federal environmental review process is called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) — a large document that reviews the kinds of impacts that would be caused by building the Longview coal export terminal and shipping coal through Washington's railways.

- Federal, state, and local decision-makers will use the EIS to make a final decision about whether to approve or deny the coal terminal.
- This first phase of producing an Environmental Impact Statement is known as the Scoping phase. In the Scoping phase, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Washington Department of Ecology, and Cowlitz County will decide the breadth and depth of impacts that will be included in the EIS.
- In Longview, it is very important for the EIS to consider the impact of train traffic and huge open coal piles next to the Columbia River and the residents of Longview.

WHY SHOULD WE PARTICIPATE?

Through the scoping process, the Department of Ecology, Cowlitz County, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will decide which impacts to study in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We’ll urge the agencies to use the EIS to disclose all of the impacts of coal exports — everything from the health, environmental, and safety risks of mining coal in Montana, to shipping coal by rail through communities across the Northwest, to storing coal in open piles near Longview neighborhoods, to burning coal abroad and exacerbating dangerous climate change. Coal and rail companies want to ignore most of these issues.

WHERE & WHEN WILL HEARINGS HAPPEN?

Comments will be accepted in writing through the fall. Department of Ecology will release more details on where to send those comments soon, and evening public meetings are tentatively scheduled where you can give oral testimony.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN SCOPING HEARINGS?

We need you, your friends and family, your neighbors, your co-workers — it’s going to take a village to stop Big Coal in its tracks! Bring friends, and wear a red shirt to show where you stand!

ATTEND COAL TRAINS AND COAL TERMINAL PUBLIC HEARINGS THIS SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER.

Sept. 17: Cowlitz Expo Center, Longview
Sept. 25: Spokane Convention Center, Spokane
Oct. 1: The Trac Center, Pasco
Oct. 9: Clark County Fairgrounds, Vancouver
Oct. 17: Tacoma Convention Center, Tacoma
How To Make a Comment

You don’t need to be an expert to contribute your thoughts, ideas and concerns. You can share your personal story, a concern in your community or whatever issue motivates you. We want to explain why we oppose coal exports and identify impacts from the project that we consider significant. In your testimony, you can explain how local resources such as air quality, water quality, and human health could be affected by the proposed coal terminal and trains. Here are a few key issues to consider:

- With 16-mile long trains each day, the proposed coal project has the potential to snarl local traffic and increase air pollution. Pollution from open coal cars and open piles will harm the community and cannot realistically be mitigated.

- Any infrastructure improvements necessary to facilitate coal trains — such as the proposed SR 432 re-alignment project and a new overpass at the foot of the Lewis & Clark Bridge — should be part of the EIS review. Without major changes, coal trains would make traffic unbearable in Longview.

- The EIS should evaluate the cumulative impacts of coal trains in communities like Camas, Washougal, Vancouver, Spokane, Seattle, and the Tri-Cities that could see train traffic from multiple coal export terminals.

- The EIS should evaluate the human health impact of coal exports on Longview from coal dust and diesel pollution, and should assess how toxic coal will impact the Columbia River.

While one of our goals for these hearings is to establish a broad, rigorous scope of review in the EIS, another goal is to use the Scoping process as a platform to demonstrate the enormous public opposition to coal exports. Your participation and your perspective matter!

How To Get Involved

There are many ways to help out. You can gather extra comment cards in your community or volunteer at a phone bank. Contact Laura Stevens to find out more: laura.stevens@sierraclub.org, 503-238-0442 x 305. More info available at powerpastcoal.org.

For official news from the Department of Ecology, or to submit comments online, visit: millenniumbulkeiswa.gov.

Attend a No Coal Workshop to Prepare for the Hearings:

PORTLAND: Saturday, September 7, 2:30–5:30PM, First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park, Portland

SPOKANE: Monday, September 9, 4:00-8:00PM, Community Building Lobby, 35 W. Main Ave, Spokane

OLYMPIA: Thursday, September 12, 6:00-8:00PM, Traditions Café, 300 5th Ave SW, Olympia

BIRCH BAY: Saturday, September 21, 6:00-8:00PM, Northwest Park Rec. Gym in Bay Horizon Park, 7506 Gemini St, Blaine

VANCOUVER: Monday, September 23, 2013, 7-8:30PM, Brickhouse Bar and Grill, 109 W 15th St, Vancouver

MARYSVILLE: Thursday, September 26, 6:30-8:30PM, North West Parks and Rec gym in Bay Horizon Park, 7506 Gemini St, Blaine

EDMONDS: Thursday, October 3, 6:00-8:00PM, Edmonds Library, 650 Main St, Edmonds

TACOMA: Tuesday, October 8, 6:00-8:00PM, Wheelock Public Library, 3722 N. 26th St, Tacoma

BALLARD/SEATTLE: Wednesday, October 9, 6:00-8:00PM, Trinity United Methodist Church, 6512 23rd Ave NW, Seattle