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## **Statement from Brett VandenHeuvel, Columbia Riverkeeper and Power Past Coal Coalition: Army Corps Fast-Track for Port of Morrow Coal Port Ignores Too Many Unanswered Questions**

The Army Corps is putting on blinders to the impacts from the proposed coal terminal at Port of Morrow [if they do not conduct a full and thorough review](#) of the community impacts – called an Environmental Impact Statement. Anyone can take a look at a pile of coal vs. a pile of wheat and immediately know that one of these things is not like the other. Coal is a dirty and dangerous combustible fuel that would travel in open rail cars through our communities, and on barges and massive cargo ships through our commerce corridors, fishing grounds and recreation areas. The Army Corps needs to allow the public to weigh in with comments in this process and conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement.

Fast-tracking this proposal is an affront to the 25,000 residents that called on the Army Corps to do a full EIS. It would fly in the face of 25 cities, counties and ports, over 160 elected officials – including Governor Kitzhaber and U.S. Senator Merkley, 573 health professionals, over 400 local businesses and 220 faith leaders, and some Northwest Tribes that have either voiced concern or come out against coal export off the West Coast.

Fast-tracking this project ignores too many unanswered questions. What are the impacts to public health from coal dust and increased diesel exhaust? How would this affect costs and travel times for other commodities moving on trains in the region and on barge in the Columbia River? How would increased coal train traffic affect congestion, existing businesses and emergency response times for communities in the Gorge and all along the coal route? Who would pay for the needed road and rail upgrades? What are the risks to tanker traffic off the Oregon Coast? What would this project mean for added air, water and climate pollution? What price would Oregonians and the region pay for the benefit of a few out-of-state and foreign coal companies?

Fortunately, the State of Oregon can deny state permits because the coal export project has unacceptable impacts. Oregon should not proceed with permit decisions until the State has all available information, including whether the Corps will conduct an EIS at Port of Morrow and conduct an area-wide EIS to look at the cumulative impact of the five proposed coal export terminals in Oregon and Washington.

The public can still convince the Army Corps to provide answers. Today we hope the Portland City Council will join many other municipalities by passing a resolution voicing concern about coal export. Now is the time for residents and leaders in communities on the rail line, along the Columbia and along the coast to speak up.

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