

# Will Spokane 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 Spokane County to massive coal export terminals in WA and OR. There are three active proposals and one currently derailed. If all three were built, it would mean up to 100 million metric tons of coal/year traveling through our communities.

## WHO'S BEHIND THE PLAN?

Peabody Energy, Australian-based Ambre Energy, its subsidiary Millenium, Arch Coal, the 2nd largest coal company in the U.S. and investors and partners including Goldman Sachs and SSA Marine.

## CONGESTION FROM COAL TRAIN TRAFFIC

Communities in and along rail-lines, including Millwood, Spokane, Spokane Valley, Sandpoint, Cheney and Tyler could see 18 trains a day with just the one terminal at Cherry Point, and up to 40 coal trains rolling through Spokane County town every day if all terminals were built.

A single slow-moving coal train can obstruct a rail crossing by six minutes or more. Adding up to 40 trains to the local area's rail system would mean blocking some crossings by four hours per day.

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

## COMMUNITIES CUT OFF BY COAL TRAINS

Added coal train traffic along the Spokane County rail line would limit access to neighborhoods, schools, and business corridors close to the train tracks. This could drive away investors for new residential, retail and commercial developments in communities in Spokane County. Increased coal train traffic could lower property values along the rail lines and would create congestion for critical business corridors. Needed upgrades would in large be funded through public tax dollars.

## HEALTH IMPACTS FOR SPOKANE COUNTY

*Coal dust: 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*

*(cont)*



*Coal train derailment in Mesa, WA July 2012. Spokane County could see up to 40 coal trains a day if all the terminals in WA and OR are built.*

**PHOTO CREDIT: TONY EVELAND**



PHOTO CREDIT: SIERRA CLUB.

*“These coal cars would be releasing diesel exhaust and coal dust along the way. As a mom and nurse, I felt compelled to speak out about the negative health implications for our community.”*

**— JULIE STRANDQUIST, A REGISTERED NURSE IN SPOKANE AND MOTHER OF THREE**

ranging health dangers of coal dust include exposure to toxic heavy metals like mercury and increased rates of asthma, especially in children. Coal dust and diesel exhaust from coal trains can cause serious long-term health problems like lung and heart disease and cancer. Coal dust would pollute our clean air and water.

“One of the greatest impacts from a significant increase in coal train traffic is the serious health problems from breathing diesel exhaust emissions and escaping coal dust containing toxic substances linked to birth defects, cancer, and increased asthma and lung disease in children. Other possible impacts include noise pollution and lowered property values, traffic and first responder/utility delays at crossing, competition with passenger travel and other goods, transportation by rails, increased risk of derailments

caused by coal dust accumulation on the rails, air pollution and economic challenges related to infrastructure upgrades.”

--Spokane City Councilmembers Amber Waldref and Jon Snyder in a March 2012 letter to The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Ecology, and the Whatcom County.

#### COUNTY CONTACTS:

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## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1

**Call Senators Cantwell and Murray** and tell them they need to demand the Army Corps conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) at Ambre Energy’s Port of Morrow proposal on the Columbia River - the only project without an EIS - because it would impact WA communities. 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 Gov. Inslee at 360-902-4111** and tell him it is more important than ever that he protect our communities. Governor Inslee must ensure his state agencies conduct the broadest possible review of the cumulative impacts of all the coal export proposals.

## POWER PAST COAL

**communities against coal export**

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