

Submission Number: *FD-30186-000077*

Received: 6/17/2015 5:43:54 PM

Commenter: Don Steinke

Organization: Vancouver resident

State: Washington

Agency: Surface Transportation Board

Initiative: Tongue River Railroad

Submission Text

Hi Please enter the attached into the public record. Don Steinke

To the Surface Transportation Board

Regarding the Tongue River Rail Road

You didn't ask for my email address when I called in this morning,

June 17, 2015

My name Don Steinke crVancouverUSA@gmail.com

Resident of Vancouver Washington.

Arch Coal is seeking permits for the largest coal export terminal in America in Longview Washington. So this railroad is intended to feed a massive coal export terminal. To think otherwise is delusional.

The coal industry has said, the most important city in Montana is Longview WA. The agencies have spent 2 years preparing a Draft EIS for the Longview terminal.

Longview Export Terminal

I urge the No Action Alternative because the your Draft EIS has ignored the Longview component of the Arch Coal plan and has ignored the impacts to Vancouver and all the other rail communities in our state.

Did you ask the people of Spokane what they think? Did you ask the Vancouver City Council? Did you know that nothing has upset the tribes more than the coal and oil trains which endanger their treaty fishing rights?

Economic Development and Property Values

Google "Columbia Waterfront" to see the billion dollar development underway on our waterfront. The Columbia Waterfront is of pre-eminent importance to Vancouver and actually all of SW Washington.

We've already spent 50 million developing it. Coal trains will sabotage its success. Who wants to invest in condos and hotels with coal trains rumbling next to the restaurant patio. The wind has already blown coal dust onto our food from the existing coal train traffic.

There are a million people whose waterfront properties would lose value if coal trains were constantly travelling through.

In many communities the first responders would need to wait too long for the coal trains to pass.

The coal trains back up traffic at many at-grade crossings, forcing the taxpayer to spend a billion dollars on grade separations.

Health

We've spent hundreds of million dollars cleaning up the diesel exhaust from our school busses and we don't want to reverse that progress by adding 40 of the dirtiest locomotives in the fleet to our air space every day. According to the EPA, every dollar spent reducing diesel emissions reduces health care costs by 4 dollars.

The diesel emissions would degrade the health of 2 million people.

The City of Longview already has one of the highest rates of air related health problems. A huge pile of coal in their community will degrade their air more. For example in Norfolk Virginia, the topsoil 8 miles away is 1% coal. The finer the particles, the farther they travel and the worse they are for your health.

Greenhouse gases

In America, our utilities have spent billions of dollars converting from coal to natural gas in the hope of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. What good does that accomplish if the coal we don't burn is shipped over to Asia. The Tongue River RR makes a mockery of our effort to reduce our emissions.

Atmospheric levels of CO₂ are already too high. It is not good enough to prevent increases, we need reductions. We cannot combat climate change by building more fossil fuel infrastructure.

Our policy is to reduce emissions 50% by mid-century. We can't wait until 2049 to get started. Instead of exporting coal, Montana should be exporting wind energy.

At the G7 summit ten days ago, the leaders recommitted to the arbitrary goal of keeping global temperature's from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius.

The temperature has already risen 0.8 degrees Celsius and look what we have. Record floods in Calgary, Colorado, Texas, and in Tbilisi Georgia.

Record drought and forest fire in the American West. In Washington State, we are experiencing a wet drought. We had adequate rain, but it arrived as rain rather than snow. Much of our food comes from crops irrigated by snowpack. No snowpack, no food.

Since carbon takes thousands of years to drop out of the atmosphere, the only way of bringing concentrations down again within a reasonable time is for greenhouse-gas emissions to drop drastically—perhaps to zero. So if the goal of keeping global warming to 2°C is still being taken seriously then de-carbonisation may be the only way to keep overall carbon concentrations within bounds.

The purpose of the Tongue River Railroad is to maximize shareholder profit. The purpose of government is to protect the greater good.

If you allow this railroad, you'll be serving the shareholders.

You have a public trust obligation to protect the planet for our grandchildren and their grandchildren.

Choose the no action alternative.