

I'm Norman Bishop. I live at 2898 Itana Circle. I can read this a lot better if I've got my glasses on. To just amplify very briefly Nick [inaudible 0:46:30.9] comment about where the smoke goes and where the pollution goes, it becomes sort of [inaudible 00:46:37]. Even if it's burned, if coal is burned in Asia it still ends up even in the high Arctic. I was there September a year ago.

The US Army Corps of Engineers must respond to serious scientific and citizen concerns about the safety of air quality and fisheries and wildlife impacts of constructing ports on the West Coast to transfer coal to Asia by conducting an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Environmental Impact Statement must comprehensively consider the environmental and economic impacts these proposals can have on climate change, agricultural operations in communities and transport. Further, it's imperative that the Corps considers the worldwide pollution and climate change impacts of digging, hauling and burning 1.3 billion tons of coal. The analysis must consider the possibility that new ports could lead to the digging, hauling and burning of other coal resources in Eastern Montana, contributing even more than the projected 2.6 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the development of Montana's [inaudible 00:47:58] alone.

In his seminal book, "Storms of My Grandchildren," climate change authority James Hansen points out on page 173 that although coal reserves are uncertain we know there's plenty of coal to take the planet far into the danger zone, guaranteeing climate disasters.

In another book that one viewer called "an unconventional and lucid explanation of the likely macroeconomic developments of the world," titled "2052," Norwegian author Jorgen Randers concludes that due to inertia and short term thinking we're not going to address climate change until it has reached catastrophic levels.

I hope he's wrong and he hopes he's wrong, but each decision we make each day takes us one step in the direction of either consumption or of conservation of the Earth's resources for our descendants. The Corps has the opportunity to take a giant step in the right direction. Thank you.

Good evening. Bob Hawks, 703 West Koch here in Bozeman. I'm going to summarize very quickly by simply saying that I don't disagree with everything that I heard here tonight and I like the emphasis, it's right on target. I took the opportunity this past week to attend a hearing in Lame Deer for the summit of the railroad, where I happened to hear a well-presented story by Cheyenne elders as to the impact of this coal train on their reservation. I can tell you that the type of life and quality of life issues that they speak to are perhaps in some ways different than ours, but it will severely impact their surroundings. They have for two years been doing cultural and resourceful inventories trying to document their quality of life so that in fact it can be considered.

If this is done right, we will be doing the same thing. We will take the time in this EIS to assess all of the cultural and historic impacts of this train going through our countryside, and that includes everything you have talked about tonight. I will say to you that with this economy in Montana, the quality of life issues in Montana find us in a very delicate area.

We think of the high tech here in Bozeman, it is as delicate as agriculture is across the state of Montana. For very different reasons, but it all has to do with clean air and the way we live. If you look at agriculture, especially with the climate change, here we go with a policy that it is probably going to – it will – fuel climate change that will affect our agriculture in a way that being marginal to begin with is double the impact with the trains on top of it, and we've a catastrophe down the road.

Thinking of this in terms of what it is, a short-term gain for a few individuals with the long-term impact on our culture and our country and the world, I would say that the Corps of Engineers does have a big task before them.

Good evening, I'm Bill Swearingen. I live at 502 South 6th with the previous speaker. I'm the director of TechLink, which works with high tech companies throughout the state and nation in fact. I'd like to address an aspect of this issue that hasn't previously been touched on. That is the potential impacts of increased coal train traffic for our local economy.

I think we all appreciate the fact our local economy, at least compared to many other places, is probably thriving. It's thriving because of our clean environment and our high quality of life has enabled us to attract a thriving high tech industry here in Bozeman, as well as a light manufacturing sector. Many people don't realize we have well over 100 high tech companies here in Bozeman that provide clean high wage jobs. For example, the 600 employees of Oracle have an average salary of over \$82,000 a year. It stands that there are 3200 employees in the high tech and like manufacturing sector in Bozeman.

The point to make here is that these are companies that could be located virtually anywhere. They are industries that are all footloose, which means that they can easily pick up stakes and move on. They chose to be here because of our [inaudible 00:40:07] and our clean environment and our quality of life.

You don't find such companies in Billings, you don't find them in Butte, you don't find them in Great Falls, you don't even find them in Helena. There are a few in Missoula. What's the reason for this? Well the University of Montana State University is clearly a factor, but the main reason is our high quality of life.

We're taxing ourselves to make the quality of life even higher. Think of the recently passed parks and trails fund. It doesn't make any sense at all to support or facilitate activities that would seriously degrade the livability of our community.

Substantially increased coal train traffic does present such a threat. The high tech companies that are a major pillar of our economy could easily move anywhere but more importantly our ability to attract new entrepreneurs and high tech companies could fully disappear. It wouldn't really take a lot to reach that kind of an economic tipping point; 30 or 40 extra coal trains a day could probably do it. The railroad has touted the economic benefits, the new jobs that increased coal train traffic would present. Well, these economic benefits are absolutely puny compared to what we have to lose.

If we had rational zoning here, we wouldn't today bisect the city with railroad, so let's make sure that our existing railroad doesn't gut our economy.

My name is Richard Parks, I live in Northern Montana, PO Box 196. That sounds a little far afield from the railroad tracks, and it is, but I just want to point out a few things that are being missed here apparently by the Corps of Engineers. One of those is they don't appear to have any problem understanding that massively increased coal train traffic would be a problem in Seattle, 40 miles or so south of the proposed coal ports. Frankly, if it's a problem in Seattle it's a problem not along the entire rail.

It's a fraud on their part to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement without considering the entire route from the coal mine to the port. The problem with fugitive coal dust for instance is going to be the highest closest to the ports and closest to the mines, just in the natural way of things operating. But they don't propose to consider the mine or the routes through Montana. They didn't do that.

Associated with some of the prior meetings on this I've seen commentary in the press from people in the railroad, Montana Rail Link and Burlington Northern, Santa Fe, indicating that, "Oh, yes, We've got a little [inaudible 00:44:04] capacity but you can stop worrying because then we're maxed out and it isn't going to ... The full [00:44:08] isn't going to happen, and you already hit upon [inaudible 00:44:12] in. Just, your paranoid, it isn't going to happen."

Let me tell you something, Warren Buffet who is the big wheel behind Berkshire Hathaway who owns Northern Santa Fe and is associated with Arch Coal, who owns the proposed [inaudible 00:44:34] now, lease on the government, has sufficient money to increase the capacity however much they decide they want to increase. I can go down to the hobby store and buy an eco locomotive, and I'd probably have to think harder about doing that than they do about to General Electric to buy a real one.

Don't let anybody tell either you or the Corps of Engineers that capacity cannot be expanded to meet whatever they choose to ship over the railroad. Another point while I'm on a tangent but it's related to capacity, a lot of the trains going through here are loaded with grain. Montana is a major grain producer. Right now our shippers are captive to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe. They're paying outrageous freight charges to get their produce to ports, and that's not going to get better if the grain farmers are pushed off the railroad by coal cars.

The Corps of Engineers has got a lot to study here, besides what they seem to think they have studied.

My name is Jennifer Swearingen, I live at 502 South Sixth Avenue. I would like to thank Northern Plains and especially Bev Kearney for organizing this hearing. I agree with the others who have spoken that local impacts must be analyzed so that we can come up with some litigation strategies and evaluate, and do something to mitigate these negative impacts that we know are coming down the road.

Coal dust, diesel emissions, vehicle exhaust, noise pollution. They will all have significant impacts to public health and the environment and our personal lives. I also agree with Nick, very strongly, that we have got to look at the big picture. We have got to analyze the impacts [inaudible 00:36:55]. I think it should be a priority focus of the EIS.

Climate change is now undeniable. Since we last gathered at city hall we have experienced record high temperatures in Montana, we have had historic forest fires. We have seen news reports of the epic storms that others have mentioned, especially Sandy, and devastating droughts and huge crop losses in the Midwest.

We know that the most important factor in preventing catastrophic local climate change is whether we can make the shift to cleaner fuels before it's too late. Facilitating the export of Montana's coal to Asia would perpetuate dependence on coal, lock in soaring carbon emissions and it would ensure disastrous climate disruption. Therefore, I strongly urge the Corps of Engineers to conduct a comprehensive EIS that includes not only local impacts but local impacts due to climate change.

Doing otherwise would be negligent and irresponsible. Thank you again to Northern Plains for providing this opportunity to comment.

My name is Carol Dietrich and I live at 120 East Story. I'm actually a kindergarten teacher in the World Family School, which is] here in Bozeman. This evening I've brought with me a copy, it's actually from 1990, it was a magazine called "In Context." There's a cartoon on the front, a Pogo little comic. What it says is, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

This cartoon expresses the situation we find ourselves in today on the planet. Regarding coal export to China, we mine the coal, we sell it, it brings cost revenue to Montana, it brings money to the MRL Company.

Public awareness has grown through meetings such as we are having tonight. Tonight I've heard some things and some things that are quite disturbing to me regarding the fracking and the gas. Because when the block exploded on Main Street we had a gas leak right out in front of our house and a gas man came in and the basement his machine was going like wild. I really thought, "Man, who is doing the solar ad?" There are other ways; there are solar and et cetera, et cetera.

Public awareness has grown immensely through meetings such as we are having here tonight. I have become aware, at a meeting like this, of how farmers living beside the coal strip aren't able to use their pastures because of the ash from the coal mining and when it seeps up into the water and kills their cows. Various people have spoken of that. Regarding the trains, what I can support are cargo trains without coal which may hopefully include some passenger cars.

That very loud and disturbing sound which we hear so frequently and which has caused such a big disturbance, the MRL might actually do the blocks themselves and ... My time is over. Anyway, protect our planet. Thank you.

Hi, my name is Nick Bentley. I live at 313 North Grand, here in Bozeman. I have two points to make. First, to drive home points about health issues that other people have made, the World Health Organization has epidemiological data which tells us that per unit energy produced, coal kills us at a rate of 4,000 times that of nuclear power. I use nuclear power as the comparison because you know if somebody is pushing for a broad expansion in the transport of fissile material across our state, a lot of people would think twice about allowing that. Coal is 4000 times more deadly.

You might say, "Well, a lot of that death is going to happen in China where it's burned and that's the Chinese's decision about whether or not they want to do that." I can make the same defense of any common drug dealer. We bear a responsibility to the people with whom we do business. That's just plain ethics.

Second, the epidemiological data that I have mentioned doesn't take into account any of the projected risks associated with climate. Now you might say the future is uncertain and you don't know what effects of climate change will be. With that I will agree, it's uncertain. But so far all the evidence we have suggests that our projections just a few years ago about how climate change will progress have been conservative.

The temperatures around the world are increasing more rapidly than we expected them to; ice is melting far more rapidly. A lot of the things that we just considered risks a few years ago are no longer just risks, they're actually yielding real disasters. We're seeing this with storms around the world. If you look at the payouts that the disaster insurance companies have been giving out in the last couple of years, those have been increasing exponentially.

Finally, food prices are going up because weird weather events are affecting our ability to grow food around the world. Now we as a first-world country, we get used to just assuming that we'll have food. But civilization is built on food and when it gets scarce people start fighting. We're living inside of a classic psychological bubble in which we have all agreed to the same set of incorrect assumptions, and we're putting ourselves at great risk. I beg the Army Corps of Engineers to stand up, to do the right thing and to take account of these risks.

My name is Margarita McLanty. I live at 85 Chicory Road in Pray, Montana, and I'm going to take this on a tangent. I was one of the 23 people who were arrested in August by refusing to leave the rotunda of our capitol building.

I want to invite you to join with me in an incredible opportunity that has been granted to us. Last Wednesday we had our first omnibus hearing. We had a sympathetic judge who is going to allow us to give a proactive defense. We are asking for a jury trial. Our defense will be one of necessity, our premise is that the actions of the Land Board in granting these leases to the companies so they're going to be exporting coal is erroneous on several levels. One being economic, their data is false and incomplete.

We are going to be bringing in expert witnesses. It's going to be about a week's worth of jury trial they're telling us, sometime in spring. This is an extraordinary opportunity. We are putting coal on trial. We need your help, we're going to blow the Land Board open and we're going to educate the rest of Montana about what changes we are going to accomplish with your help. I'm going to pass out a little bit of information here and Kristen has more back there. It's an awesome opportunity we've been granted so come along folks, it's going to be good.

My name is Dan Kaveney. I live at 630 East Davis Street in Bozeman. I wanted to thank you guys from Northern Plains Resource for having this gathering and thank you for everybody who's testified so far. I wanted to talk a little bit about climate and coal, because we've had a lot of testimony about trains and health and it's all great stuff but maybe I could add a little on climate.

Lately in the United States the demand for coal, the percentage of coal in the energy mix for generating electricity has been going down dramatically, probably by about 40 percent. This is because cleaner fuels, natural gas have become available. As a consequence we're emitting less carbon in the atmosphere in 2011 than we have in any years in the recent past. Say what you will about fracking, it's not perfect but it is helping lower our carbon footprint. In some ways it's a good thing.

On the other hand, China is having a spiraling demand for coal. China expects to use 15 times the amount of coal that it did in 1990 by 2040. This is going to more than erase all of the carbon gains that we've made in the United States, Canada and Western Europe.

Now in the United States ... Oh, and natural gas emits about the half the carbon per ton of natural gas combusted as coal dust. Not only is it better, it's far cleaner. That's one of the reasons that we're making progress. We do need coal in the United States to carry us through this transition from fossil fuels to cleaner, better forms of energy. But I agree with this gentleman here – I'm sorry I didn't catch your name – who suggested that we shouldn't be exporting this to China. Just leave it in the ground until we need it here. If we export it to China they're going to burn it, put all the carbon in the air and then we don't get to use it when we need it.

If we go forward with this, what's going to happen is the American taxpayer is going to subsidize the coal companies and the railroads to a great extent. We will pay for the extra infrastructure through higher taxes, and it's going to be needed. The Pentagon has a plan for dealing with climate change that involves sending US troops into harm's way. We will pay for that, but more importantly people are going to get hurt. Basically what we're doing is we're making a huge transfer of public resources to Communist China and to foreign oil companies, and it doesn't make any sense.

As far as I'm concerned we're standing on the edge of a cliff here with climate change. We can either do something about it or not, but if we don't do something about it we're not really jumping off a cliff ourselves, we're throwing our kids off the cliff. Because I'm going to be dead by the time this gets real serious, but my kids won't. That's not only cowardly, but it's silly. I think we should try and stop it. Thank you.

I'm Dan Gebhart. I live at 2948 Warbler Way. I'm not an expert on coal or trains or on the environment, but I am a resident of Bozeman however, and aware of many reasons to oppose the increase of coal bearing trains through the city that I call home. Mounting evidence demonstrates the overwhelming negative impacts of coal mining and combusting on public health. Washington state, from which the proposed coal would be shipped overseas recognizes the severe economic, public health and environmental types of climate change on their state and by extension, on ours.

Other states are taking steps to reducing American dependence on coal-fired power. Washington State, to which the coal would be transported via Bozeman's residential neighborhoods is receiving proposals to export tens of millions of tons of coal shipped by rail from the Powder River Basin in Montana to Washington's ports for shipment overseas. Because coal is commonly transported via open-top rail cars without covers, it will be contaminate cities, towns, farmland, forest land, streams and rivers with coal dust and chunks of coal.

A recent study calls coal dust a pernicious ballast foulant which can destabilize rail tracks and contribute to train derailments. Coal contains toxic heavy metals including mercury, arsenic and lead. Exposure to these toxins in high concentrations is linked to cancer and birth defects. Increased rail traffic will lead to increased diesel emissions along the rail lines through Bozeman.

Exposure to particulate matter through diesel engines has been linked to an impaired pulmonary development in adolescents, an increased cardiopulmonary mortality, measurable pulmonary inflammation, increased severity and frequency of asthma attacks, emergency room visits and hospital admissions in children, increased rates of heart attacks in adults, increased risk of cancer, asthma and lung disease in children. High concentrations of coal dust have caused marine dead zones in areas where coal is loaded or transported near water.

The new coal export terminals being considered are expected to increase coal train traffic through Bozeman by at least 30 trains per day, causing concerns about blocked roads inhibiting the travel of emergency and other vehicles, pedestrians, and access to waterways for fisherman and other recreational use.

Montana aspires to be a national model for creating clean energy jobs, aspires to innovating, developing, demonstrating and marketing clean energy technologies and practices that promote sustainable global economic development. Coal export, in contrast, promotes the most destructive and unsustainable energy development practices. These findings and concerns are reason enough for us to question the increase in train traffic for the transport of coal through Montana and downtown Bozeman. Thank you.

My name is Phil Knight, I live at 205 North 24th Avenue in Bozeman, 25-year resident of Bozeman. I have a couple of concerns that I haven't heard mentioned yet. One is impacts to wildlife that attempt to cross the train tracks.

If you drive out toward Bozeman Pass as we go through the Bear Canyon Interchange you might notice soft fences along the interstate highway. Those are to funnel wildlife underneath the highway so they don't get hit on the highway. Well guess what they have to cross when they go underneath the highway? The railroad tracks. Doubling or potentially tripling the number of trains that goes through there means more collisions between trains and wildlife, and we know who loses in those situations.

There is great potential for derailment of trains in the Bozeman Pass area. I have personally worked on a cleanup of a derailed train there. You might remember a couple of years ago there was a number of burnt train cars right there below the interstate where the train derailed. Some of the cars actually burned right there. Imagine if those were loaded with coal, what that would be like, potential for forest fire and I don't know what else.

Then of course another major concern is climate change. No mystery that climate change is happening pretty rapidly in this area. It's really coming home to roost in this country. We're seeing the impacts of it affecting more and more of our citizens with Hurricane Sandy, what they're calling the super storm Sandy, that's the first time I've heard that word applied regularly to a storm. That's probably a direct result of climate change. We saw a record loss of sea ice in the Arctic this year around the pole, and climate change is accelerating the loss of sea ice.

Of course mining coal in Montana and shipping it to China would vastly increase the impacts on our climate for the use of that coal. You've got all the fossil fuels that are used to move the coal from Montana to China and other potential foreign markets. Climate change, wildlife, derailments, you name it; we've got some problems if we start on this project, so thank you.

My name is Ayesha Ashley, I live at 58 Elmwood Drive, Bozeman. As I watched this process I've been to the two meetings with the city councils where it was ... nothing was done. It feels to me like we have a David and Goliath situation here. We have huge, huge money to be put against us. Don't think that the railroad and the mines of the Chinese market is a small amount of money. It's huge, it's in the billions. Here we are in a position of David and Goliath.

What is our tool, how can we actually do something? We are citizens, if we can get this protest in front of the Engineer Corps we might be able to have them stop and actually look. But we have to really act with the strength and the skill and precision of putting that stone right where it is going to make the greatest impact. Otherwise we are going to be having meetings like this for years, dealing with the fallout from the coal.

My name is Glenn Monahan, 420 North 10th Avenue, Bozeman. A lot of you may have seen in the *Chronicle* last week a story reporting that sometime in the near future the United States is predicted to become a net exporter of oil. This is because we've developed horizontal drilling techniques and trapping techniques that show tremendous potential for increasing our oil production here in the United States.

For decades we have been hearing from our federal government, from our presidents in the State of the Union address, how we have to break our dependence upon foreign oil. Here we are on the verge of achieving that and what are we going to do with the oil, we're going to export it, it's insanity. I see the same thing with coal, although I am not a proponent of using coal as a domestic energy resource.

I have two solar systems on my roof, so I'm walking the walk. When I look at these coal deposits as something that our nation may need in the future, and for us to be taking energy resources and exporting them to far countries, particularly China, which is killing us in many fronts as far as our jobs in this country, is also insanity. Exporting unprocessed raw materials is what third-world countries do. To me, for the United States to engage in that is to be allowing ourselves to drop to the level of a third-world country.

I suspect, I haven't researched this thoroughly, but I would suspect that both in the case of oil and in the case of coal, most of this material is coming from either federal leases or state leases. What I would hope is that we can pursue legislative processes that absolutely bans exporting energy products that come from federal or state leases to other countries, which would be keeping those here for our own use. (Applause)

Kristen Walser, 1711 Wildflower Way in Bozeman. I'm going to talk a little bit differently than the [inaudible 00:08:12] coal trains and the test findings. [Inaudible 00:08:18] a little bit, because I want to tell you about something that happened this past August. There was a protest up in Helena for about a week. We were protesting ... It was a Coal Export Action, did anybody hear about that? Great. Hundreds of people converged on the capitol to conduct a non-violent protest leading up to the Land Board of the meeting when [inaudible 00:08:48] Coal was going to submit its application to develop the Otter Creek Mine in the Powder River Basin.

Even though the Land Board rescheduled its meeting a week before the action, we think because they wanted to avoid us, protesters occupied the rotunda of the capitol each day from August 13th to the 20th, driving attention to the emitting impacts of coal from the plains to the ports. That was our goal. Every day protestors stayed in the capitol after closing time, facing arrest and a night in the Helena jail. In all, 23 people were arrested including me and Margarita McLarty who is over here. Linda Kenoyer from Livingston also was arrested.

Protests like these spread the word about mining pollution, its leaching of toxins into surface and underground water, the proposed Tongue River Railroads splitting into [inaudible 0:09:51.0] ranch land, the devastating impact of coal trains that are mile and a half long trains and 143-ton cars begging for derailment, dust, disruption of quiet and emergency vehicles. The ports are vulnerable as well. Imagine a staging area where coal must be moved from pile to pile constant constantly to inhibit spontaneous combustion. Tons of dust from that.

Also, just thinking about the dangers of coal and the impact that it has on the marine life and the forest. Then to ship Montana coal that's too dirty to meet our standards to China where its mercury pollution and other pollutions that we've already heard about will come right back to us in a week's time.

This winter and spring we hope to keep educating the public and politicians about why expanding coal production in Montana is bad for them and the state and [inaudible 00:10:48] raise money for our legal defense, and that's kind of why we're here. We do need to quickly raise about \$2,000.

We hope to get in some expert witnesses, like possibly Bill McKibben, people who are going to talk about the moral economic and environmental impacts of coal. We'll have lots more chances to publicize this through the trial. It's going to be during a legislative session possibly, so we really will need your help to help us pull this off. We'll be talking a lot more about it too.

If you would like to, we can talk to you later at the back table and also pick up one of these and you can sign up to help support us. Thank you.

Virginia:

Hi, my name is Virjeanna Brown. I live at 720 Northern Pacific Avenue in Belgrade, Montana. I agree with everything the prior speaker said, but I can speak from experience of where I live right now. I currently stay home full-time and I care for a very disabled child. I look out my front door and I'm right across from the railroad tracks. What I experience now is horrifying, so I can't even begin to imagine what it would be like to have 30 trains or 60 trains.

In the summertime I can't even keep my windows open because the train comes by and it's so loud and I'm close to two intersections. I have been startled and I have dropped glasses, I jump. It interrupts my sleep. For a long time I couldn't figure out why I was waking up at 3:30 in the morning and I finally figured out why. It was the train was waking me up.

I have [inaudible 0:07:14.3] now, and it disturbs me. I go to Denver every three months because my granddaughter is really sick, and I look at all the pollution down there. We have such a beautiful state and I'm horrified by the prospect that it's going to be ruined with all this pollution.

I really think it's time that people stand up and say enough about profit, we need to start taking care of ourselves and our future generations. We need to be responsible about our water and our land. I just want it to stop, I don't want any more trains to come than there already are. That's really all I have to say.

My name is Richard Damon. I live at 24 Golden Trout Way here in Bozeman. I'm a retired physician. As you all know, the Army Corps of Engineers has decided to not conduct environmental impact studies of coal transport across the state. Communities and rural areas concerned about the adverse effects now are finding a strong imperative to speak out against the Army Corps of Engineer's approval to ship coal from West Coast ports to the foreign market.

Coal transport across the state has become a principle concern of communities in vulnerable rural areas, but I would like to speak about other far-reaching effects on health and environment. In my mind, there are four separate related aspects for consideration. The first consideration is the health impact from the exposure to coal dust. You've heard of some of this. There is no such thing as clean coal, and the phrase should be removed from ever being used. If exposed to graded coal dust particulate matter a person is at risk for serious disease, affecting various organ systems, in addition to the lung.

Coal dust contains uranium, which decays into radon, a volatile gas which is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Even lower sulfur containing coal produces bio toxic sulfur and acidifies the water. Coal contains arsenic, lead, mercury, cadmium, vanadium, selenium. All of these are known health hazards to humans.

Coal dust in variable amounts is released along the entire train corridor into populated and rural areas. Unfortunately, coal transporters have not rigorously heeded the existing regulations to spray surfactant on coal in transporting presumably to the coast.

The second consideration are the effects of coal mining on coal workers, and on the people living close to mines, and on the environment. Removing coal from the ground and processing it creates slurry ponds filled with toxins which leech into groundwater for hundreds of years. Nearby streams are acidified, dried up coal ash ponds gives toxic dust harmful to breathing and leave wells contaminated beyond water drinking standards. There is widespread groundwater contamination near coal mines and coal fire plants. Coal ash lakes and slurries resulting in 100 times the allowable toxic level of heavy metal.

The EPA calculates there is a 2,000 times increased risk from living around coal ash ponds, from arsenic. Coal workers and residents living near the mines have higher rates of cancer, hospitalization, COPD, high blood pressure, childhood asthma. Despite chemical washing of coal to prepare for burning, it still retains cancer-causing agents.

The third consideration has to do with exposing coal combustion and combustion waste by those who use coal. The combustion process gives out particulate matter; nitrates, sulfates, mercury, estimated to cause 24,000 deaths

per year by the Center for Disease Control. It emits nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide, creating acid rain and contaminating water. Coal-fired power plants are the number one producer of methyl mercury, a neurotoxin which gets into fish, water life, humans and disrupts normal fetal development.

The fourth consideration and the one we are here to mainly discuss is the community rural impact of coal transport. The number of coal transferred through communities in the countryside will be expected to double or triple. Frequent disturbing train noise has been studied, and those exposed to high and frequent levels of noise have been found to be at greater risk for all forms of stress affecting health. More chemical waste and diesel exhaust is emitted into the air, which contains at least 40 confirmed toxic air contaminants, mercury being one of those.

There would be more traffic delays at crossings, possibly causing critical waits in emergency vehicles. Higher taxes are expected to be levied to pay for the overpasses, underpasses and rail crossings.

In summary, once those waters are contaminated the problem will be with us for years if not centuries. There is proven significant adverse human public health and environmental effects from exposure to coal dust, diesel exhaust, coal ash slurries, coal combustion and exposure to waste products and coal mining.

There are objectionable caustic effects of increased coal transport through communities. If powerful corporations with big money win out over health, safety and wellbeing it is another example of money-driven policy which ignores health and environmental impacts.

We have cleaner, healthier and environmentally friendly alternative energy sources available which are more protective of public health and the environment. Remaining silent on this issue gives implied consent for coal transport across Montana and supports the Army Corps of Engineer's approval of West Coast port export. In essence, China will get the energy and the underwater pollution, Wall Street will get the profits and Montana will get the bill, along with harmful and caustic environmental fallout. Thank you.