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Would you like to be added to the mailing list? Yes No

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Combined NEPA/SEPA

Environmental Impact Statement

Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur

Place
Stamp
Here

GPT/BNSF Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies
c/o CH2MHILL
1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004

Randall Perry
US Army Corp of Engineers

RE: Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal draft EIS scoping comment.

I would like to thank the Army Corps of Engineers for conducting this hearing in Spokane, indicating that the agency is willing to address the full scope of the proposal. Residents of Spokane will be adversely affected by the construction of a coal port facility at Cherry Point. For example, I live, literally a stone's throw from the railroad tracks. As it is now, every time a train goes by the entire house shakes. An increase in coal train traffic will adversely impact me and my family through lower property values, increased coal dust and diesel fumes with their consequent health impacts, and diminished quality of life from incessant train traffic.

As required by NEPA, the Army Corps needs to conduct a full EIS that addresses the cumulative impacts of this proposal. Those impacts are not limited to the immediate area of Cherry Point, but include impacts from transportation and extraction of the coal. Therefore the EIS needs to examine impacts to communities along the entire route, from the Power River Basin to the West Coast. The potential impacts include: public health impacts, traffic congestion and delays, increased infrastructure costs, loss of wildlife habitat, diminished quality of life, and contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. What are the potential consequences of mining, transporting, and burning 100 million tons of coal on climate change? All of these need to be addressed in the EIS.

In addition, the EIS needs to assess the impact on surface and ground water contamination and air quality. The potential for water pollution from coal train derailment, coal dust, and increased diesel traffic is especially pronounced in the Spokane area with the close proximity of the Spokane Aquifer and its connection to the Spokane River. Degradation of air quality along the rail route also needs to be examined. Given that Washington lies directly in the path of the emissions that will come from burning the coal in Asia, the EIS should assess the potential for increased SO₂ and mercury levels that will result.

Because the Cherry Point proposal is just one of five proposed coal port facilities, it is imperative that the scope of the EIS include the cumulative impacts to Spokane of the development of all facilities, as required by NEPA. A piecemeal approach will lead to "death by a thousand cuts" and subverts both the letter and intent of the law. Therefore the EIS needs to evaluate the full impact of the 60 or more coal trains would have upon, not just Spokane, but all the communities from Billings to Bellingham. The scope of the EIS also needs to address the impacts of strip mining in Otter Creek, Montana. The only market for this coal is in Asia and therefore is directly tied to the Cherry Point proposal.

Sincerely,



Greg Gordon
1217 S. Oak
Spokane WA