

November 5, 2012

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Dear Army Corps of Engineers, and others responsible for creating the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal:

I have many questions about the health and safety effects of the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal and the resulting increased coal train traffic. Specifically, these are the things I request that the environmental impact study look at:

1. I have friends who live in Smokey Point, on the west side of the 172nd street rail road crossing. I am concerned that they and their daughters, ages 6 and 2 (active, accident prone children), will be stuck on the “wrong” side of the tracks in a medical emergency when a train is at the crossing. Would you please study the impacts of 18 additional trains per day on the ability of emergency response vehicles to get to the hospital? This problem would impact anyone who lives on the opposite side of the rail road tracks from a hospital.
2. Although I live in Everett, I go to church in Marysville. If I have to stop on 4th Street to wait for a mile and ½ long coal train for 6.5 minutes and it makes me late for church, that is not a huge concern. However, as I sit on 4th Avenue in Marysville waiting for that train, I have the opportunity to wonder how many businesses along the train tracks in Marysville will be negatively affected by increased coal train traffic? I have already listened to many business owners express concern that the streets are already congested and they worry about more train traffic. Would you please study the economic effects on businesses, specifically in Marysville, if there is more traffic congestion. Will customers simply take their business elsewhere?
3. I have a garden within 2 blocks of the rail road tracks. I understand that coal dust shakes out of the open train cars at a rate of 500 pounds per car per trip. Would you please study how far that coal dust reaches, and if it will accumulate on the soft fruit in my garden – my strawberries and raspberries? As you know, this type of soft fruit cannot be washed vigorously. May I still call my garden “organic” if toxic coal dust is on my strawberries? I know a number of gardeners who are close to rail road tracks in Snohomish county, so this affects a great number of us, and the children who eat our strawberries.
4. I understand that derailments can be caused by an accumulation of coal dust that sifts down onto the tracks. I assume that the derailments would not be

limited to the coal trains, but would include any train on the tracks. With this increased traffic, statistically, how many derailments can we expect in Snohomish County? What will be the cost of this to the county for cleaning up the mess from this?

5. Given that there are a number of trains carrying crude oil from the tar sands, what are the statistical odds that one of the trains to be derailed would be carrying crude oil, and what would be the effects on the land on which the crude oil is spilled? What would be the costs of clean up to Snohomish County? These are things that affect Snohomish county, but obviously would affect the entire state as well.
6. Given the accumulation of coal dust on the tracks, what are the statistical odds that tracks in our county would catch on fire how many times per year? What would be the cost to the county, and in extension, to the state per year?
7. A friend of mine who lives on Grand Avenue in Everett, high on the bluff above the train tracks, must wipe the coal dust off the balcony railings often. If there is this much coal dust rising that high in the air, how much coal dust falls on Port Gardner bay, which is even closer to the tracks? The railroad tracks run all along Puget Sound, from the south sound all the way to Cherry Point. What is the average amount of coal dust per train that goes onto the water with each 120+ car train? And what is the impact on the marine life – both plants, fish, and other living organisms in Puget Sound? How many of those groups are in danger of extinction and with additional toxins from coal dust will push the extinction sooner rather than later?
8. I take walks along the beautiful new waterfront path along Marine View Drive in Everett. The city has done a lovely job on this. As I look eastward, over the railroad tracks and up onto the bluffs, I can see a number of earth-slides down the bluffs. I fear for the safety of the homes on the bluffs. The coal trains are longer and heavier than regular freight trains, and as such, I request that you study how much of a seismic hazard they are to our bluffs and the expensive homes at the top. I believe this would also be a hazard in Mukilteo, Edmonds, Bellingham, and anywhere there are homes on bluffs near the railroad tracks. Burlington Northern is not responsible for shoring up these bluffs. What cost will there be to the city? Or will it be the homeowners who will pay for it?
9. I fear this seismic hazard in downtown Everett as well. The bridge over the railroad tracks on Broadway has already been identified as fragile. Would you please study the seismic effects on the bridges that the trains pass under? If this bridge must be replaced, what would be the cost, and who would pay for it?
10. This next issue is one I have been talking with a number of people but none of us have any idea on how to calculate this. I hope that you will. Our area,

Western Washington, attracts many tourists, who come for the mountains, and the waters of Puget Sound. Fishing, hunting, boating, many outdoor activities attract thousands of tourists each year. Tourism creates many jobs, in hotels, cruise ships, restaurants, tours guides, coffee stands, etc. We have a joke about issuing a kit to tourists as they enter Washington state - dust masks to protect the lungs, ear plugs to keep out the noise, and crossword puzzles to stay entertained while waiting at train crossings. When our state develops a reputation for being a coal corridor, an industrial hallway for coal trains, with coal dust everywhere, noise from train horns, and traffic congestion, how much tourism trade will be eliminated? How many jobs will be eliminated because tourists go elsewhere, where they can find clean air and water?

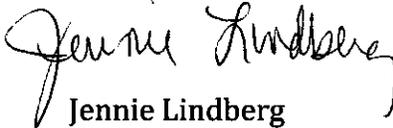
11. My work is at a non-profit agency that houses low income, formerly homeless pregnant women and women with small children. This is 2 blocks from the railroad tracks. I'm sure you will be studying the effects of the toxic coal dust on people in general as we inhale it. But would you also please study the additional effects on the unborn fetus of pregnant women? In addition would you study the effects on small children under the age of 5? Our agency is thinking of building a new facility, and expanding our services. I would like to know if it is wise to do this in our current location 2 blocks from the tracks, or if we should attempt to find property farther away from the train tracks to protect these vulnerable babies, small children and pregnant women? This information would be valuable to us, but also to anyone close to the train tracks who is pregnant, or has small children or is thinking of purchasing a home.
12. I have grave concerns about the effects of the whole process of mining, transporting and burning coal will have on global climate change. The coal trains will emit nitrogen and sulfur oxides, which create acid rain – how much acid rain will be falling on my garden? What effects will this acid rain have on my soil and my ability to continue to grow my strawberries and raspberries?
13. Please study the effect on climate change of:
 - a. digging up coal in the Powder River Basin
 - b. increased diesel fumes in the atmosphere
 - c. increased coal dust in the air
 - d. the exhaust of the ships carrying the coal to China
 - e. China burning the coal
 - f. Ground water contamination
 - g. Vs. leaving the coal in the ground
14. I understand that coal includes arsenic. How much arsenic will accumulate in the soil as the coal dust blows around from the open train cars? Would you please study how much accumulation of arsenic there will be per year?

15. When the coal is taken by train to the Gateway Pacific Terminal, it will be loaded onto ships. The noise and vibration from the loading will affect the fish and marine life around the terminal. Would you please study the effects of this noise and vibration on the fish and marine life?
16. I understand that an engineering firm from Boston has been contracted with to study the effects of noise and vibration on fish and marine life. Can you tell me why a local company was not awarded this opportunity, and why this business had to go out of our state?
17. The coal train are noisy, and the horns that are blown are noisy. This noise disrupts sleep and concentration. How many schools are within ½ mile of the train tracks, and how will this affect school children? Will coal dust in the air affect their ability to play on the playground? What kinds of lung diseases or other diseases will increase in children playing around the train tracks?
18. Train traffic, in general, is economical and a benefit to the environment. But the addition of all the coal trains from Wyoming would take up a lot of space on the tracks. Would you study whether or not this would impact Amtrak and/or other passenger trains and the ability to expand passenger trains in the future?
19. I understand that additional train tracks would be needed in switching yards, and in Bellingham near Cherry Point. What will these cost, and who will pay for them? How will these additional tracks affect the waterfront park in Bellingham?
20. I understand that China is currently the world's largest producer of solar panels. They are developing alternative, renewable energy sources. They are also developing infrastructure to mine their own coal. How long will they be interested in coal from the United States? How long would this export terminal be operational, and when it is no longer operational, who will pay for the clean up it leaves? What will be done with the no-longer-needed terminal?
21. Increased train traffic, noise and coal dust will decrease property values. Many homes along the waterfront belong to wealthy people who enjoy views of Puget Sound. These currently upscale neighborhoods will be no longer desirable, with increased train traffic. How much will property values decrease? Have these homeowners been notified about the change in their neighborhood? Have they been given an opportunity to express their opinion about their property values? How much revenue will this take away from the cities in which these homes are located – Edmond, Mukilto, Everett?
22. What are the dangers of the ships carrying the coal running aground, or spilling the coal into the ocean, or spilling their fuel into the ocean?

23. Several Native American sovereign nations have come out against the Gateway Pacific Terminal and the exporting of our coal. Would you please study the long term effects of the negative relationships that we in the USA will have with these sovereign nations that are within our borders, should this terminal be built in spite of their concerns?
24. Please study whether or not there are important Native American sites, such as an historic burial grounds, on or near the proposed site of the Gateway Pacific terminal.
25. What property could be seized as a result of a need to expand existing train tracks to support the increased rail traffic? Has this property been identified? Have the owners been notified? Do they have a chance to express their opinion and/or concerns? What will determine the amount of money they are compensated for their property?

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns, and I trust that you will be careful to address all these issues and more in your Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,


Jennie Lindberg