

07/16/12

RESOLUTION NO. W-3778

A RESOLUTION of the City Council of the City of Vancouver, Washington, expressing concern regarding the impact of increased coal transport rail traffic in Vancouver resulting from proposed coal export terminal projects in Whatcom County Washington, Cowlitz County Washington, Grays Harbor County Washington, Morrow County, Oregon, Coos County, Oregon and Columbia County, Oregon and requesting that the agencies reviewing the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for said projects, including federal, state, and local agencies, include impacts, both direct and cumulative, along the train and Columbia River routes for freight moving to the proposed terminals in the EIS and that at least one of the EIS Scoping hearings and one of any other subsequent hearings related to the EIS for each coal export terminal project be held in Clark County.

WHEREAS, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) track runs through and bisects the city of Vancouver running east/west; and

WHEREAS, another BNSF line runs north/south through the City of Vancouver, uses a railroad bridge located in southwest Vancouver to cross the Columbia River to points in the State of Oregon, and the bridge and line are also used by Union Pacific trains; and

WHEREAS, there are proposed coal export terminal projects in Whatcom County Washington (the Gateway Pacific Terminal Project, or GPT) and Cowlitz County Washington (Millennium Project) in addition to possible proposals for Grays Harbor County Washington as well as Morrow, Coos and Columbia counties in Oregon; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vancouver supports projects that create jobs and provide a healthy economy locally and regionally and understands that many permanent and potentially thousands of temporary construction jobs are at stake with the coal terminal proposal, and

WHEREAS, the City of Vancouver, in partnership with the Port of Vancouver, is investing millions of dollars in public funding to improve its waterfront area with the intention of attracting new jobs and improving rail capacity; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vancouver supports the rail expansion project underway at the Port of Vancouver which will create additional capacity to move goods and freight; and

WHEREAS, the proposals (except Morrow County), if completed, will result in significant new rail traffic through Vancouver, including at least twenty additional trains per day of up to one and half miles long; and

WHEREAS, the Morrow County proposal will result in additional barge traffic along the Columbia River near the City of Vancouver; and

WHEREAS, this increased rail traffic will have impacts in Vancouver including but not limited to increased traffic congestion and delays to residents and commerce, increased tail pipe emissions from stopped and idling vehicles and increased diesel emissions; and

WHEREAS, Vancouver has been made aware of potential impacts from coal dust and other particulates that may be blown from open rail cars and barges including air and soil pollution and health impacts but has no way to evaluate such potential impacts; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County, Washington Department of Ecology and the United States Corp of Engineers have entered into an MOU to jointly promulgate the required EIS and are currently scoping the EIS for the GTP project; and

WHEREAS, Cowlitz County is evaluating an application and developing an EIS for the Millennium project and Washington Department of Ecology and the United States Corp of Engineers are also involved such evaluation; and

WHEREAS, the nature and scope of the environmental review for the other coal export terminal proposals has yet to be determined; and

WHEREAS, said agencies should include the impacts of coal-based export facilities, including increased rail traffic and coal dust, in the scope of the EIS for each coal export terminal project, and public hearings at the various stages of the EIS process should be conducted in Clark County; and

WHEREAS, the Federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) require the consideration in environmental review of both the direct and indirect impacts of the terminal proposals including off-site impacts along the rail lines used to deliver coal to the terminals; and

WHEREAS, NEPA and SEPA require the consideration in environmental review of the cumulative impacts of all of the terminal proposals including those actually applied for and those that are reasonably foreseeable; and

WHEREAS, substantial uncertainty exists, including contradictory evidence, about the environmental effects of coal dust potentially escaping from the trains, potential impacts on water quality resulting from coal barge traffic, and the number and size of trains using the tracks passing through the City of Vancouver; and

WHEREAS, uncertainty regarding coal trains and barges passing through or near Vancouver should be clarified in NEPA and SEPA review; and

WHEREAS, the City of Vancouver wishes to become a Party of Record regarding all of the coal terminal projects proposed in the states of Oregon and Washington.

**RESOLUTION - 3**

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF VANCOUVER:

Section 1. We urge all local reviewing Washington and Oregon agencies, the Washington State Department of Ecology, reviewing Oregon State Agencies, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers to include impacts of the proposed coal export facilities on Vancouver, including but not limited to increased traffic congestion and delays to residents and commerce, increased tail pipe emissions from stopped and idling vehicles, increased diesel emissions and potential impacts from coal dust and other particulates that may be blown from open rail cars and barges in the scoping of the EIS for both the GPT project and the Millennium project and all coal export terminal projects reasonably foreseeable in the states of Washington and Oregon.

Section 2. We urge all local reviewing Washington and Oregon agencies, the Washington State Department of Ecology, reviewing Oregon State Agencies, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers to conduct an analysis of the cumulative impacts of the GPT and Millennium project and all coal export terminal projects reasonably foreseeable in the states of Washington and Oregon through a SEPA and NEPA environmental impact statement process.

Section 3. We urge all local reviewing Washington and Oregon agencies, the Washington State Department of Ecology, reviewing Oregon State Agencies, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers to conduct at least one EIS scoping hearing for each coal export terminal project and at least one of any subsequent hearings related to the EIS for all coal export terminal projects proposed in the states of Washington and Oregon at a location in Clark County.

Section 3. We request that the City of Vancouver be made a Party of Record for all coal export terminal projects proposed in the states of Washington and Oregon.

Section 4. That this Resolution shall take effect and be in full force upon passage and signatures hereon.

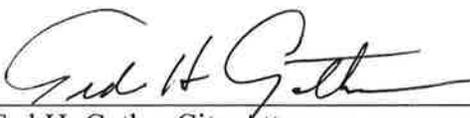
ADOPTED at regular session of the Council of the City of Vancouver, this 11th  
day of July, 2012.

  
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Timothy D. Leavitt, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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R. Lloyd Tyler, City Clerk  
By: Carrie Lewellen, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
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Ted H. Gathe, City Attorney