Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2012

Brigadier General John R. McMahon
Commander
Northwest Division U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 2870
Portland, OR 97208-2870

Mr. Steve Gagnon, Project Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
P.O. Box 2946
Portland, OR 97208-2946

Re: Request for Comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement on the Cumulative Impacts of New Coal Terminals in Washington and Oregon

Dear General McMahon and Mr. Gagnon:

We write to you to urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to conduct a cumulative environmental impact statement (EIS) with respect to the considerable number of permit applications before the Corps for new export terminals in the Northwest.

Currently, four export terminal projects located in Washington and Oregon have permit applications pending before the Corps. It is our understanding that the primary purpose of these terminals is to ship coal that was mined in Wyoming and Montana and transported through Washington and Oregon.

Collectively, these projects are estimated to increase the United States coal capacity by 157 million tons per year. Today, the United States exports approximately 80 to 100 million tons of coal annually from *all* ports nationwide. If approved, and operated at capacity, these new projects would more than double America's coal exports – all of which would travel through Washington and Oregon via rail and public waterways.

This significant increase in coal being transported throughout the region will have a serious impact on the region and surrounding communities. Indeed, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in its April 5th letter to the Corps, lists a number of potential impacts including the effects on public health, transportation, cultural resources, endangered species, and aquatic resources. Furthermore, the EPA has recommended that the Corps conduct a "thorough and broadly-scoped cumulative impacts analysis of exporting large quantities of Wyoming and Montana-mined coal through the west coast of the United States to Asia. This cumulative impacts analysis could be used in the environmental analysis of other proposed coal export projects of similar scope."

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To be clear, this request is not intended to supplant the existing environmental work that the Corps must prepare for each permit application. Rather, we are requesting that the Corps complete an additional cumulative process assessing the impacts that all of these proposed export terminals will have on the region.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions, or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the Alan Lee in Congressman McDermott's office at (202) 225-3106. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

JIM MCDERMOTT
Member of Congress

ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress