

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

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June 13, 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

Dear General McMahon and Mr. Gagnon:

I write regarding permit applications for new export terminals in the Pacific Northwest and to urge you to undertake a thorough cumulative impact analysis of these projects.

As you know, four companies currently have permit applications pending before the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for new export terminals which will primarily serve to export coal from the Powder River Basin to locations overseas such as Asia. If approved, these export facilities would more than double our current coal exporting capacity.

While each of the applications are separate and distinct, they all share common elements that, when considered cumulatively, stand to have significant environmental and public health impacts. These potential environmental and public health impacts are of considerable importance, particularly when considering the multitude of proposals. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is instructive in a situation such as this, calling on federal agencies to consider impacts from past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

In addition to possible environmental and public health impacts to neighboring communities, concerns have been raised about effects on cultural resources, rail and waterway transportation systems, endangered species, aquatic resources, and impacts of transporting coal mined in Wyoming and Montana and sent through the West Coast for export, which has not been specifically studied by the federal government.

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I commend the Corps' efforts to date to inform the public and provide clear information on the purposes of the proposed export terminals. As the Corps continues with its environmental review process on each proposed permit application, I strongly encourage you to also perform a thorough cumulative impact analysis consistent with the law. I appreciate your consideration, and look forward to hearing from you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Patty Murray  
United States Senator