

January 18, 2013

GPT / Cluster Spur EIS  
c/o CH2M Hill  
1100 112th Ave. NE, Suite 400  
Bellevue, WA 98004

I am a resident of Anacortes, Washington, retired from a 37-year career as a U.S. Forest Service forest ecologist. My wife and I chose to live in this area of Washington State because of its spectacular natural beauty, as well as pure, clean air and water. My purpose for submitting the following comments is to direct attention to certain issues that I believe should be part of the EIS concerning the effects of coal transport relating to the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT).

My particular concern is about the direct and indirect health risks to humans of all ages posed by coal dust and diesel particulates associated with the transport of coal along the rail corridor from Montana and Wyoming to the proposed GPT at Cherry Point, WA.

It is already clear that uncovered coal cars lose huge amounts of dust and cinders in transport. Such losses are reported to be about 500-2000 pounds per car during a journey of several hundred miles. In addition, diesel train engines pulling coal trains belch out huge amounts of particulates, which can lodge in lung tissue, causing emphysema, asthma, and other respiratory ailments.

I urge the EIS team to critically analyze the long-term anticipated direct and indirect public health costs posed by illnesses related to inhalation of coal-dust and diesel particulates. Such particulates are well-known elements in human respiratory diseases, especially in children. I want to see an analysis of how to charge back to the coal industry the costs of treating such respiratory diseases for people along the rail corridors.

What would be the potential per-car per-mile taxes that states and municipalities could impose on the rail carrier and coal producer to mitigate expected private and public health costs?

If coal cars were covered or sealed, what would be the reductions in dust and diesel exhaust emissions? Would it make much of a difference? I'm assuming a minimal difference. Coal dust and diesel exhaust particulates would always be a problem because covers would blow off, equipment would fail, or de-railments would occur.

Sincerely,



Torolf R. Torgersen, Ph.D.  
4910 Paisley Place  
Anacortes, WA 98221

January 19, 2013

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c/o CH2M Hill  
1100 112th Ave. NE, Suite 400  
Bellevue, WA 98004

My wife and I chose Anacortes, Washington, as our retirement home, ...that was 13 years ago. We were careful to choose a quiet suburb that had pure water and clean, unpolluted air. We here are fortunate at the moment, with that abundant pure water and the clear air. But those who live or work along the proposed coal train corridor may have their personal health, life style, and property values decline if the Green Point Terminal (GPT) project is approved. And if the environment for all of us changes for the worse because China is burning the coal brought to them by parades of coal-bearing trains and ships, the quality of all our lives will be diminished.

A major concern for me relates to the effects of coal trains on transportation and traffic. Here are some of my particular concerns:

(1) The trains are so long that vehicle traffic at railroad crossings will have repeated interminably long waits each and every day, ....possibly for scores of years. Such backups will have serious, life-threatening implications for people who depend on emergency vehicles like fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars. The EIS needs to address the direct and indirect costs to the public that such backups represent, and to analyze how these costs can be passed on to the railroad and coal producers. What about rerouting or building new rail lines that sidestep these problems?

(2) Normal traffic---cars, buses, and trucks taking people back and forth to work and to the office will back up to adjacent streets and cause serious congestion, primarily in cities and towns. Can the coal industry and the railroad company pay to build detours, overpasses, and bridges to ease this congestion? Consider this element in the EIS.

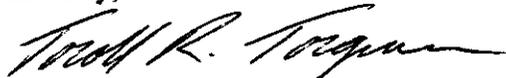
(3) Inevitable derailments, spillage, and railroad crossing accidents will cause more problems, cost lives, and degrade the environment. The EIS should consider the cost to the public, the coal industry, and the railroad to prepare for such emergencies. The EIS needs to address the need for emergency response teams to quickly deal with catastrophes.

(4) The rail congestion caused by the addition of many miles of coal trains in addition to current passenger or commuter trains, and trains carrying cargo will undoubtedly cause disruption of the overall rail transportation system. The EIS needs to address the pros and cons of adding huge amounts of additional rail traffic through large cities and dense suburbs on the limited mileage of track.

(5) The continual, loud noise of trains passing through neighborhoods and cities, and whistles blowing night and day in living areas will produce health issues for the nearby public. It is well documented that continual loud noise contributes to sleeplessness, anxiety, and produces or exacerbates existing illness for many people who live near train tracks and crossings. The EIS needs to address these noise-related issues when tallying environmental costs.

The amount of money earned by Washingtonians who get jobs from the GPT, plus taxes collected from the coal industry and railroad will be miniscule compared to the incredible costs to city and state taxpayers. Taxpayers should not bear the burden of correcting the problems of public health and safety, transportation infrastructure, and environmental damages that could be caused by presence of decade upon decade of coal-bearing trains and the terminal at Cherry Point. Be sure the EIS addresses the indirect costs of GPT to individuals, the public, and the environment.

Sincerely,



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Anacortes, Washington 98221

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I recently retired from a 37-year career as a U.S. Forest Service forest ecologist. I am also now a resident of Anacortes, Washington, so I am vitally interested in the potential ecological threats posed by the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) project. My purpose for submitting the following comments is to direct attention to specific data and analyses that I believe should be part of the EIS that examines the ecological ramifications of coal transport relating to the GPT.

My particular concern is about the direct and indirect ecological effects that might affect the stability and long-term health of terrestrial, fresh water, marine, and estuarine habitats along the rail corridor from Montana and Wyoming to the proposed GPT at Cherry Point, Washington.

Because rail corridors often follow river courses, and the three or more proposed rail corridors each extend for several hundred miles, the effects of coal-dust, particulate coal, and diesel exhaust would be distributed over huge areas, particularly watersheds and downstream areas.

Currently, the costs of public health and environmental damages associated with coal mining, processing, transportation, and combustion in the U.S. is estimated at over a third of a trillion dollars annually. I would like to have the EIS team thoroughly research current known-, or suspected long-term effects of coal-derived particulates and chemicals on riverine terrestrial and aquatic arthropods, animals, and fish. It would be appropriate also to present in the EIS, data on the cost of ecological cleanup after catastrophic train derailments in recent times, and also the time it has taken for downstream ecological recovery when such derailments have occurred near water courses.

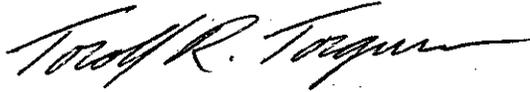
Much of the quality of life here in the Pacific Northwest is centered on our pure, clean air and water. Our identity as a region is focused on our marine and estuarine bird and animal wildlife, anadromous fish, and signature marine mammals like the orca. Minimally, I want to see the EIS report on the already known, but also the projected long-term effects, of coal-derived particulates and chemicals on acidification, littoral and benthic flora and fauna both near and far removed from the proposed Cherry Point Terminal. Some projections indicate that the one or more proposed rail corridors for the GPT might be in use for scores of years. EIS data must include projections of environmental effects for the entire, foreseeable life of the GPT! Anything less would be unconscionable.

I urge the EIS team to critically analyze the long-term anticipated direct and indirect environmental costs posed by the projected amounts of coal-derived contaminants. I want to see an analysis of how to charge back to the coal industry the costs of rectifying and mitigating environmental disasters stemming from rail accidents and events relating to the ship-loading and transport of coal. Please consider what might be the potential tonnage-, per-car, and / or per-mile taxes that

States and municipalities could impose on rail carriers and coal producers to mitigate or correct environmental disasters associated with the GPT.

If coal cars were to be covered or sealed, what would be the reductions in dust and diesel exhaust emissions? Would it make much of a difference? I'm assuming maybe a minimal difference. The EIS should address this. Coal dust and diesel exhaust particulates will always be a problem because covers will blow- or break off, equipment will fail, or derailments will occur.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Torolf R. Torgersen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Torolf R. Torgersen, Ph.D.  
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