

To be delivered by 5pm: comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov

I/we live in a community close to the BNSF Rail line on which up to 18 additional daily coal trains (9 full, 9 empty) will be traveling if the Gateway Pacific Terminal is built. I/we request that the GPT Environmental Impact Statement encompass the entire transportation corridor as well as the entire Puget Sound as an ecosystem so that our livelihoods, homes, and habitats are given due consideration. Questions that concern me/us, and which objective, rigorous and comprehensive study should include:

Direct impacts on Fisheries and the Puget Sound: How will tourism; boating; collision risks; coal spill risks; salmon, crab and herring fisheries; Orca whales; and the general beauty, vitality, and livability of the Puget sound and environs be affected by this new coal port construction and operations, and by the other 950 annual transits of coal ships to come? We and our fellow workers depend on healthy salmon runs and healthy, non-toxic shellfish, as does the marine and bird life in Seattle/the Puget Sound. The trains will be running directly through and over the Carkeek Park salmon beds, where baby fish are already struggling without the added stresses of arsenic and mercury from coal dust in the river. How will this specific park be affected, and the baby salmon/eggs in its rivers?

Direct and cumulative impacts of Coal Dust pollution: Please investigate this in the areas of rail safety; increased risks of spills due to coal dust buildup on tracks; increased shellfish toxicity; the general health of the community that lives on/near the rail way and up wind of train traffic; investigate how coal dust and port run off contributes to the acidification of the ocean/Puget Sound, and how this will impact the wildlife there; specifically investigate the Puget Sound's water currents in evaluating what kind of build up there will be, whether or not the pollution will be able to drain out of the sound effectively, and if not, what the overall cumulative impacts of that build up of toxins will be, while also taking into account possible pollution from spills; impacts on workers health who handle the coal, and the costs they will have to pay for increased health care expenses.

Black Carbon and burning coal: Please investigate what role the burning of coal plays in the creation of black carbon, which has recently been identified by scientists as the 2nd biggest contributor to global warming. How much black carbon would be added to the atmosphere if China were to burn the same amount of coal that is planned to be shipped, and what kinds of impacts would this have, cumulatively, on global warming?

How much coal smoke/ash travels to the northern ice sheet when burned in China, and what kind of contribution does it make to the melting of ice once it settles? How greatly does the build-up of coal dust/ash residue contribute to ice-melt acceleration? What companies who are profiting off this transport of coal planning to do in order to clean up in the arctic and preserve the ice sheet from melting away completely? Currently we know that black sludge from air pollutants is gathered on arctic glaciers, which results in more sunlight and heat being focused on the ice than would naturally occur. This increases below-glacier streams/cracks/rivers, which are creating new momentum to carry these ancient glaciers to sea, where they ultimately melt. This process is greatly accelerating the melting of once-permanent glaciers. We can reasonably foresee that if the arctic ice sheet is destroyed, such an event will initiate a series of global weather disasters unlike anything we have seen in recent history. Please investigate the impact of black-sludge residue on the ice thoroughly, as it's presence has only recently come to light publicly and needs much further exploration to fully understand its impacts, which appear dire. (See "Chasing Ice" by Jeff Orlowski for more info.)

Chinese preparedness: Please investigate whether or not China as a nation is fully prepared to effectively mitigate the massive influx of pollution on their people, wildlife, and waterways. What are the impacts to be expected on the Chinese people themselves, and the environment, and what solutions are available to contain the pollution so that our global environmental commons (ocean/atmosphere) are not damaged beyond sustainability?

Global climate change: At the current rate of global climate change, how much will burning this coal add to the abnormalities in our planet's atmosphere? Please produce an estimation, based in scientific evidence from multiple independent sources, of how much coal, if any, we can be allowed to burn in the next 5 years WITHOUT impacting climate change. How do the GPT's numbers fit in to that equation?

Human health and Safety: How will cancer, heart disease, asthma and other health risks be affected by air and water pollutions associated with coal transport and export? How will additional rail and ship traffic affect accident and collision rates? Toxic air pollution crosses the Pacific Ocean from Asia to the west coast of the United States; what would be the LOCAL public health impacts of Powder River Basin coal combustion in Asia?

Costs to taxpayers: How much will we, the taxpayers, ultimately pay for costs affiliated with coal transport and export? Will such direct and indirect costs include necessary upgrades and additions to rail infrastructure; safety measures; public health expenses; the building of under and overpasses and other attempts at mitigating adverse impacts; and lost local businesses and jobs?

Comment and recommendation: Some arctic experts are now predicting that with the current rate of melting, we could see the disappearance/permanent destruction of the ice sheet within 4 years time. Because of this, and all the above states costs, concerns, and negative effects this plan will no doubt have on our global environment, regardless of the local destruction and pollution it will likely cause, we urge you to consider these questions, and take NO ACTION. We do not believe or expect these effect/concerns to be mitigate-able, and decisively oppose the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal, and the companies that are in charge of planning it.

We sincerely hope you take ample time to gather the information necessary before delivering a reply.

Thank you,