

# Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview

## Health Impact Assessment—Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview (MBTL) project?

Millennium Bulk Terminals – Longview, LLC (Applicant) is proposing to construct and operate a coal export terminal (MBTL project) on a 190-acre site in Cowlitz County, Washington, along the Columbia River. The project area is located primarily within a 540-acre site currently leased by the Applicant. The proposed coal export terminal would receive coal by rail from coal mines in the western United States for shipment to customers in Asia. Once in full operation, the terminal would transport up to 44 million metric tons of coal per year. That amounts to 16 coal trains per day (8 loaded and 8 empty trains) and 1,680 vessel transits per year (840 loaded and 840 empty vessels).

### 2. When will the MBTL project be fully operating?

In order to build and operate the MBTL project, permits are required by various agencies. To determine if permits should be granted, an environmental review is required by law. The MBTL project is currently under environmental review as part of the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As part of the environmental review, two Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) are being prepared. The SEPA EIS is being prepared by the Cowlitz County Building and Planning Department and the Washington State Department of Ecology, and the NEPA EIS is being prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The environmental review is expected to be completed sometime in 2017. In addition to the environmental review, the Applicant voluntarily agreed to support a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) process.

The Applicant anticipates construction of the proposed export terminal will begin in 2018 and be completed by 2024. The proposed export terminal is anticipated to be fully operational by 2028 and is designed for a minimum 30-year period of operation.

### 3. What is a Health Impact Assessment (HIA)?

An HIA is a process that helps evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project, or policy before it is built or implemented. An HIA can provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> It is not required by law and does not play a role in the decision to issue permits for a development project. An HIA is a public health tool that uses available technical and scientific information to help communities understand how plans, projects, and policies affect their health. An HIA can also make recommendations about how to maximize the likely health benefits and minimize the potential harms of a given project, plan, or policy. The HIA being prepared for the MBTL project will focus on

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Available: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm>

neighborhoods near the MBTL project, as well as community facilities along the BNSF rail line in Cowlitz County.

**4. Why is the HIA being prepared for the MBTL project?**

During the public scoping process for the MBTL EISs, questions regarding project impacts on health and quality of life arose. On June 10, 2015, Cowlitz County Building and Planning Department staff met with representatives from Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department and the Washington State Department of Health. The agencies agreed that an HIA would be a useful tool to better understand the health effects of the MBTL project. The HIA process is in addition to the federal and state environmental processes currently underway. The Applicant agreed to fund the HIA process, even though it is not legally required for the permitting process.

**5. How does the HIA compare to the SEPA EIS?**

The SEPA EIS is required by law and analyzes potential impacts the MBTL project would have on environmental resources. The HIA evaluates effects the MBTL project would have on human health and quality of life in adjacent communities. Some analyses from the SEPA EIS may be used to inform the HIA—for example, by providing information about air quality, noise and vibration, and rail safety.

**6. Who is preparing the HIA?**

Cowlitz County’s Building and Planning Department, with assistance from the Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department and the Washington State Department of Health, will convene a Steering Committee made up of community members. The Steering Committee will identify what aspects of health should be addressed in the HIA. Experts in environmental health from the Washington State Department of Health will conduct the analysis and share results with the Steering Committee for their input. The Steering Committee will decide when the HIA is ready to be released to the public.

**7. What agencies and organizations are involved with developing the HIA?**

Three co-lead agencies are overseeing development of the HIA:

- Cowlitz County Building and Planning Department
- Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department
- Washington State Department of Health

The HIA co-lead agencies are being assisted by two consulting firms, ICF and BergerABAM. Their tasks include document preparation, meeting logistics, and meeting facilitation for the HIA process.

**8. Why is the scope for the HIA limited to Cowlitz County?**

The intent for the HIA is to engage the local community in a discussion about the potential and sometimes unintended effects of the MBTL project on the health of the community. Because the MBTL project is located in Cowlitz County, and because the HIA process is led by Cowlitz County agencies, the scope for the HIA is focused on communities in Cowlitz County, especially neighborhoods near the MBTL project, as well as community facilities along the BNSF rail line in Cowlitz County. Communities outside Cowlitz County are welcome to attend and observe the first Steering Committee meeting, as well as provide comments at the conclusion of this meeting. Following the first Steering Committee meeting, the Steering Committee will decide how to receive ongoing public input on the HIA process.

**9. What is the HIA process?**

The HIA process consists of six steps: (1) screening, (2) scoping, (3) assessment, (4) recommendations, (5) reporting, and (6) monitoring and evaluation. For the MBTL project, these six steps will be used to look at the potential and sometimes unintended effects of the project on the health of the community. More information on the steps involved in an HIA can be found on the MBTL HIA Website: <http://www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov/health-impact-assessment.html>

**10. How will Cowlitz County obtain input from the public during the HIA process?**

In October and November 2015, the three co-lead agencies held four Focus Group meetings to obtain input from the community. Individuals representing a wide range of opinions and perspectives were invited, including proponents of economic development, local elected officials, Cowlitz Tribe, healthcare providers, first responders, local school representatives, local fishery representatives, behavioral health and substance abuse providers, neighborhood association representatives, and members of Cowlitz County Health and Human Services advisory councils. As part of these meetings, the HIA co-lead agencies presented information about the MBTL project, the HIA process, and the creation of an HIA Steering Committee. The HIA Steering Committee is made up of members of the public who will oversee the analysis of HIA topics and will have final approval of the HIA report.

**11. What is the HIA Steering Committee?**

The HIA Steering Committee is a decision-making body made up of members of the public who will oversee four of the six steps under the HIA process, including assessing, recommending, reporting, and monitoring and evaluating the content of the HIA. The Steering Committee will review and approve HIA documents before public release. All reporting and dissemination of information will also be approved by the HIA co-lead agencies.

**12. How were Steering Committee members selected?**

Participants in the Focus Group meetings were invited to participate as a member of the Steering Committee. Everyone who expressed interest in being on the Steering Committee has been invited to join the first Steering Committee meeting.

**13. What are the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee?**

Specifically, the Steering Committee will:

- **Assess:** Assist in asking and answering research questions regarding health conditions and probable health impacts.
- **Recommend:** Draft recommendations based on assessment results and/or Draft EIS results and stakeholder and public feedback.
- **Report:** Review and approve reports and other project materials.
- **Monitor and Evaluate:** Monitor and evaluate the HIA process and outcomes.

Steering Committee members are expected to gather input from their friends, neighbors, and fellow professionals. The goal is to balance as much public input as possible with the need to finalize an HIA report in 2017. In addition, the Steering Committee will coordinate with the HIA co-lead agencies on the dissemination of information to the public.

**14. How can I be part of the Steering Committee?**

At this time, only those who participated in the Focus Group meetings, and expressed interest in becoming involved with the HIA Steering Committee, will be invited to participate on the committee. The Steering Committee will decide how it will receive public input on the HIA process.

**15. How often will the Steering Committee meet?**

The frequency of Steering Committee meetings will depend on the members of the Steering Committee; however, meetings will likely be held once per month or once every other month for a duration of two hours per meeting.

**16. Will Steering Committee meetings be open to the public?**

Yes, members of the public are welcome to attend and observe the HIA process. A 15-minute public comment period is scheduled at the conclusion of the first Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee will decide how to receive ongoing public input on the HIA process.

**17. When will the HIA be released? Will I get a chance to comment on the study?**

The draft HIA will be released to the public once the Steering Committee and HIA co-lead agencies have reviewed and accepted the draft HIA report. Once the report has been accepted, it will be available for public comment. It is anticipated the draft HIA will be released in 2017.

**18. What will Cowlitz County do with the findings from the HIA?**

The HIA findings will be available as a resource for the community and may inform future decisions about local development. In addition, the co-lead agencies may make recommendations to the Applicant regarding potential activities and design elements that may help address community health concerns. These recommendations will not be binding and are independent of any mitigation included in the SEPA EIS and associated permit conditions.

**19. Where can I learn more about the HIA?**

More information regarding the HIA and the MBTL project may be found on the MBTL HIA website: <http://www.millenniumbulkeiswa.gov/health-impact-assessment.html>