

## Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview Health Impact Assessment Steering Committee Collaboration Agreement

**Date:** November 14, 2016

**Purpose:** The purpose of this collaborative agreement is to establish a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities for the members of the Steering Committee for the Health Impact Assessment of the Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview project.

### **Project Background:**

Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview, LLC (Applicant) is proposing to construct and operate a coal export terminal on a 190-acre site (project area) in Cowlitz County, Washington, along the Columbia River. The project area is primarily located within a 540-acre site currently leased by the Applicant. The proposed coal export terminal would receive coal from the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming and the Uinta Basin in Utah and Colorado via rail shipment, then load and transport the coal by ocean-going vessels via the Columbia River and Pacific Ocean to overseas markets in Asia. The coal export terminal would receive, stockpile, blend, and load coal by conveyor onto vessels in the Columbia River for export. Once in full operation, the proposed export terminal would stockpile coal on 75 acres, transport 44 million metric tons of coal per year and include operations of 16 coal trains per day (8 loaded and 8 empty trains) and 1,680 vessel transits per year (840 loaded and 840 empty vessels). The Applicant anticipates construction of the proposed export terminal will begin in 2018 and be completed by 2024. The proposed terminal is anticipated to be fully operational by 2028 and is designed for a minimum 30-year period of operation.

During the public scoping process for the Millennium Bulk Terminals—Longview (MBTL) project Environmental Impact Statements, 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 a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) would be a useful tool to better understand the health effects of the MBTL project.

### **Health Impact Assessment:**

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

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

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 neighborhoods near the MBTL project, as well as community facilities along the BNSF rail line in Cowlitz County and other areas deemed necessary by the Steering Committee.

### **Steering Committee:**

The HIA Steering Committee is a decision-making body made up of members of the local community who will identify what aspects of health should be addressed in the HIA. The Steering Committee will review and approve HIA documents before public release.

### **Health Impact Assessment 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 immediate community. The role of the Steering Committee will be to assist with the assessment, recommendations, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation of the HIA.

### **Health Impact Assessment Goals:**

Goals of the HIA for the MBTL project are listed below.

1. To provide the Applicant, participating agencies, and other decision-makers with information about the relative health and health equity impacts of the proposed coal export terminal so they can more effectively address the potential health effects of the proposed terminal and other development proposals.
2. To provide other interested stakeholders with information about the relative health and health equity impacts on the residents of Cowlitz County.
3. To increase understanding among Cowlitz County residents about the connections between major development projects and health and health equity.
4. To conduct an HIA that conforms with the “Minimum Elements and Practice Standards for Health Impact Assessment” (Version 3, 2014).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Bhatia R, Farhang L, Heller J, Lee M, Orenstein M, Richardson M and Wernham A. *Minimum Elements and Practice Standards for Health Impact Assessment*, Version 3. September 2014.

## Key Definitions:

*Health Impact Assessment:* The HIA is a systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods, and also considers input from stakeholders, to determine potential health effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project. Data and analysis will be used to assess the impact of these potential health effects on the community and the distribution of the effects within the community. HIAs provide recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects.

*Health Equity:* Health equity refers to the disparities between population groups in the presence of disease, health outcomes, or access to care that result from a variety of changeable social factors such as income inequality, educational quality, natural and built environment conditions, individual health behavior choices, and access to health care. Health equity is improved as these disparities are eliminated or minimized. Health inequity is exacerbated as these disparities grow.

*Health:* A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.<sup>3</sup>

*Health Impacts:* Any change in the health of a population or any change in the physical, natural, or social environment that has a bearing on public health.<sup>4</sup>

*Stakeholders:* Individuals or organizations who are affected by the policy, plan, or project under consideration; have an interest in the health impacts of the policy, project, or plan under consideration; and/or have direct or indirect influence on the decision-making and implementation process of the policy, project, or plan under consideration.

## Decision Making Guidelines:

When making decisions, the Steering Committee will strive to reach consensus by the entire group. Consensus does not require that every member of the Steering Committee fully supports a particular decision, but that everyone at least agrees that (1) the proposal meets the standard of acceptability for every Steering Committee member present, and (2) the process has been fair (everyone has had full opportunity to express their views and the group has done its best to close the gap).

The standard of acceptability for this Steering Committee will be met when each member rates their support for a proposal as at least a 3 on a 1 to 5 scale, where a 1 is “I cannot support this proposal at all,” 3 is “I can live with it,” and 5 is “I fully support it.”

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<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization. 2016. *WHO definition of Health*. Available: <http://who.int/about/definition/en/print.html>. Accessed: September 8, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> National Research Council. 2011. *Improving Health in the United States: The Role of the Health Impact Assessment*.

Consensus decision-making requires patience and trust on everyone's behalf. Steering Committee members must commit to express their views clearly, to listen attentively, and to search for solutions that bring people and ideas together.

In cases where consensus by the entire group cannot be achieved after concerted effort and a decision is deemed necessary by a majority of members present, the decision will be based on simple majority rule with group approval being established when a simple majority of voting members rate their support for the proposal as a 3 or higher. Steering Committee members who dissent from the majority will have the option to write a minority report for inclusion in the final report.

Decisions can be made only when a majority of Steering Committee members are present, either in person or by phone. A vote by email or other remote means may also be allowed, at the Steering Committee's discretion.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee:**

The Steering Committee is a decision-making body that will oversee the assessment, recommendations, reporting and dissemination, and monitoring and evaluation phases of the HIA. It will also review and approve HIA documents before public release.<sup>5</sup>

Involving the public is an important part of the HIA process. Steering Committee members are expected to gather input from their friends, neighbors, and fellow professionals. The Steering Committee is strongly encouraged to identify and incorporate public comments into their decision making. This includes developing a system to engage the public and collect comments in different formats and clearly expressing how input received from the public will be used.

Specific Steering Committee responsibilities for each stage of the HIA include:

#### *Assessment:*

Support the Cowlitz County Department of Building and Planning, Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department, and the Washington State Department of Health's efforts to answer research questions regarding baseline conditions and probable health impacts by:

- Helping to identify data sources.
- Helping to interpret results of local data collection.
- Reviewing and commenting on drafts of assessment findings and reports.
- Approving final drafts of assessment findings for inclusion in the final report.

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<sup>5</sup> All reporting and dissemination of any information must be approved by the co-lead agencies (Cowlitz County Building and Planning Department, Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department, and the Washington State Department of Health).

*Recommendations:*

- Draft recommendations based on assessment results and/or the SEPA Draft Environmental Impact Statement results.
- Work with interested stakeholders to review and solicit input on recommendations.
- Approve final set of recommendations for inclusion in the final HIA report.

*Reporting and Dissemination*

- Help develop a dissemination strategy, including talking points, that identifies opportunities for communicating findings to stakeholders and identifies who will be responsible for communicating to different audiences.
- Review and approve final report and other HIA dissemination materials.
- Help implement the dissemination strategy by sharing materials, presenting HIA findings, talking to media, etc.
- Optional 2-hour communication and dissemination workshop.
- Coordinate press releases with Cowlitz County Department of Building and Planning, Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department, and the Washington State Department of Health.

*Monitoring and Evaluation*

- Review and approve a plan to evaluate the HIA process and outcomes.
- Participate in the monitoring and evaluation plan by responding to the evaluators' inquiries for feedback.

**Roles of Other HIA Participants:**

*Interested Stakeholders:* Interested stakeholders are technical advisors that have been identified by the Steering Committee as having resources or advice to offer at various stages of the HIA process, or are individuals or organizations who have expressed interest in engaging with, or tracking, the HIA process. Interested stakeholders may participate in the HIA process on an ad hoc basis. They will be provided regular updates on the HIA as it progresses, and will be consulted when appropriate.

*HIA MBTL Project Team:* The HIA MBTL Project Team includes staff from Cowlitz County Department of Building and Planning, Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department, and the Washington State Department of Health, as well as Cowlitz County's contractor, ICF, and the contractor's subconsultant, BergerABAM. The HIA Team will be leading the HIA process and completion of the HIA in coordination with the Steering Committee.