

From: shane yellin <shaneyellin@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 8, 2018 1:32 AM
To: Fazio, Nick
Subject: Comment on draft HIA

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January 8, 2018

Dear Nick Fazio,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the draft HIA for the Millennium (MBTL) coal export project. This is the first draft HIA to be prepared by Cowlitz County in cooperation with the Washington Department of Health.

While lacking in some areas, this draft is a strong first start. It should provide the basis for strong recommendations from the HIA Steering Committee to prevent construction of the MBTL project and forever protect the health of communities from the dangers of coal mining, transport, storage and export. It can also be a tool to protect the health and safety of Cowlitz County residents from future projects that endanger human health and our climate.

While I remain concerned about the influence of Millennium on this HIA process, the data provided was striking. I was taken aback reading the information which showed the current health status of residents of Longview (and neighborhoods of Highlands, Lexington, and St. Helens) compared to other cities in Washington. The mortality rates from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases alone are a strong reminder of why we should not further endanger their health with a coal export project. These neighborhoods should not become a "sacrifice zone" to benefit corporate interests.

The draft shows the project will have huge impacts:

*Increased cancer rates in communities near the rail line.

*Significant coal dust and diesel particulate matter (DPM) exposures that can lead to death, hospitalization from heart and lung disease, asthma attacks, pneumonia, decline in lung function, asthma in children, plus growing evidence of stroke, Type 2 diabetes, neurological and cognitive impairment, and pre-term and low-birth weight babies.(p.9)

*Higher noise exposure in low income areas in Cowlitz County. Noise is associated with higher rates of high blood pressure, heart attack and heart disease. Cowlitz County and the neighborhoods that would be most impacted by increased noise already experience higher than average rates of these diseases and that increased noise will contribute to further increase in these rates(p. 23)

*A single train could delay traffic by 9 minutes at at-grade crossings. There will be 16 train trips each day at full operation. This could decrease accessibility of public services and increase wait times for emergency vehicles. (p.21)

*Cowlitz County consistently ranks near the bottom of Washington counties in health indicators (p. 13)

*Cowlitz County and affected neighborhoods would be at even greater risk of health effects than other parts of Washington.(p. 15)

*Tribes have the right to fish and harvest seafood. Some people eating shellfish could be exposed to potentially toxic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons due to this project (p. 25)

*Review of surfactants (chemicals added to the top of open train cars in an attempt to limit dust) was limited because some ingredients are proprietary or were not sufficiently identified to be reviewed independently for potential health impacts. (p. 26)

*44 million metric tons of coal yields about 90 million metric tons of carbon dioxide once it is used. This is roughly on par with Washington State's current total emissions in one year. (p.20)

*Changes in Washington's climate in the near and midterm future will likely increase hazards to human health and increase health disparities. Without preventative and protective measures, this will worsen a variety of health outcomes.

Please acknowledge that the significance of the draft HIA is limited due to the severely constrained geographic scope of the study area. The section on impacts from 16 trains passing through at-grade crossings in Cowlitz County each day and related health impacts due to delayed emergency response time is sorely lacking. If improved, it would at least help inform the municipalities along the transportation corridor of potential impacts to their residents and emergency services.

Finally, I ask that the HIA Steering Committee recognize and affirm that the unavoidable, significant, and adverse impacts identified in the FEIS and by the Cowlitz County Hearings Officer cannot be mitigated and that the MBTL project should be rejected.

We must prevent what we cannot cure.

Thank you for consideration of these comments.

Regards,
shane yellin