

# Will Snohomish County power past coal?

Coal companies, seeing little future growth domestically, have a new plan: strip mine coal in Montana and Wyoming, transport it on long coal trains through Snohomish County to a massive coal export terminal north of Bellingham at Cherry Point. The proposed Cherry Point terminal would handle 50 mn tons of coal per year. There are other terminals proposed in Washington and Oregon.

**Who's behind the plan?** Out of state companies, including the world's largest coal company Peabody and investors including Goldman Sachs. SSA Marine would manage the port.

## CONGESTION FROM COAL TRAIN TRAFFIC

Communities in and along rail lines, including Edmonds, Mulkiteo, Everett and Marysville could see 20 or more coal trains rolling through town every day. This would add more than 3,000 noisy mile-long loaded coal trains traveling through Snohomish County rail system every year.



PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL K. ANDERSON

A single slow-moving coal train can obstruct a rail crossing by six minutes or more. Adding just 20 trains to the local area's rail system would mean blocking some crossings by two hours per day.

Increased traffic delays at busy rail crossings would clog commuter traffic and could slow response times for emergency responders.

## WATERFRONTS CUT OFF BY COAL TRAINS

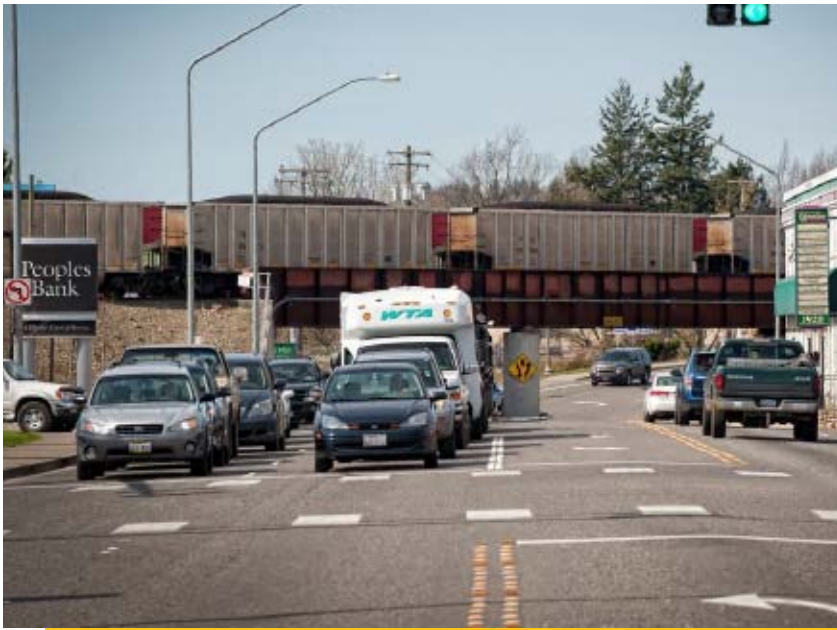
Added coal train traffic along the Snohomish County rail line would limit access to neighborhoods, schools, business corridors and ferry terminals close to the train tracks. This could drive away investors for new residential, retail and commercial developments in waterfront communities in Snohomish County.

## HEALTH IMPACTS FOR SNOHOMISH COUNTY

*Coal Train Emissions and Dust:* Diesel exhaust and coal dust from coal trains can cause serious long-term health problems like lung and heart disease and cancer. Diesel exhaust is associated with asthma, cardiopulmonary disease and increase incidences of cancer.

Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) railroad studies estimate up to 500 pounds of coal can be lost in the form of dust from each rail car en route. The wide ranging health dangers of coal dust include exposure to toxic heavy metals like mercury and increased rates of asthma, especially in children. Coal dust and diesel exhaust from coal trains can cause serious long-term health problems like lung and heart disease and cancer. Coal dust would pollute our clean air and water.

(cont)



**PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL K. ANDERSON**

“Imagine the cumulative effect of [the] trains, each a mile and a half long, rumbling through town each day. Traffic at three major crossings — 4th Street, 88th Street NE and 116th Street NE — could all be blocked at once. Gridlock would become an exasperating way of life. *Commerce would be stymied.*”

— “UNFAIR IMPACT ON MARYSVILLE,” IN THE EVERETT HERALD, JULY 29TH, 2011

*Toxic fish:* Mercury and other pollutants from coal-burning power plants travel from Asia to the West Coast of North America where they poison our air, water, fish and food supply.

#### **IMPACTS TO THE PUGET SOUND**

Close to the terminals, shorelines would be given over to industrial sites with enormous piles of coal and constant dust. For example, the proposed terminal site at Cherry Point would span 1200 acres, fill 131 acres of wetlands and sit directly on herring grounds, which are a primary food source for Chinook salmon.

The companies would ship the coal on massive cargo ships. Every year over 200 of the worlds’ biggest, most accident-prone ships would clog the already crowded Straits of Juan de Fuca and Georgia. This would mean ongoing threats to wetlands, waterways and wildlife from potential ship collisions, including salmon and orcas.

Exporting coal promotes deeper global fossil fuel dependence. It delays the urgently needed transition to

cleaner alternatives. It makes climate disruption inevitable, including extreme flooding and ocean acidification, impacting our shorelines and Puget Sound.

#### **BAD FOR THE ECONOMY**

Major public ports, such as the Ports of Seattle, Vancouver, Tacoma and Portland have rejected coal export. The proposed sites have potential for hundreds of jobs in light industrial and smart-tech growth instead of being mired in a single-commodity, unpredictable dirty export trade. Increased coal train traffic could lower property values along the rail lines and would create congestion for critical business corridors.

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## **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

**1**

**Call WA State Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark** at (360) 902-1004 and tell him “please don’t use Washington’s public waters for coal export.”

**2**

**Call Governor Christine Gregoire** at (360) 902-4111 and tell her to ensure that Washington says NO to coal export and YES to a clean energy future.

**3**

**Call Congressman Rick Larsen** at (360) 733-4500 and urge him to oppose coal export.

## **POWER PAST COAL**

**communities against coal export**

[powerpastcoal.org](http://powerpastcoal.org) | [facebook.com/powerpastcoal](https://facebook.com/powerpastcoal)

**About Power Past Coal:** We are a growing coalition of organizations sharing a common interest to prevent the West Coast from becoming a high volume coal corridor.

**Primary Partner Organizations Include:** Climate Solutions, Columbia Riverkeeper, Earthjustice, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, Sierra Club, Washington Environmental Council, Western Organization of Resource