

Coal Export PowerPoint Script—Oct. 2011

Slide 1: Coal-Free Northwest

Hello, my name is...Thank you so much for allowing me to present why environmentalists, health professionals, small business owners, and moms and dads, are opposed to exporting coal through Washington.

Slide 2: Coal is a Dirty Business

Coal is the dirtiest fuel available. The Sierra Club opposes coal exports because mining, transporting, and burning coal fouls our air, pollutes our water, sickens our children and destroys the environment.

Slide 3: Big Coal Threatens our Progress

Deutsche Bank has deemed US coal demand as “Dead man walking.” Kevin Parker, global head of asset management and a member of the executive committee at Deutsche Bank, says “Banks won't finance them. Insurance companies won't insure them. The EPA is coming after them. . . . And the economics to make it clean don't work.” For these reasons and the overwhelming public opposition to new coal plants, construction did not begin on a single new coal-fired power plant in the United States in 2010 for the second straight year.

Additionally, we have been very successful in kicking coal out of the US. In the past 2 years, 252 boilers, 79 entire plants have either retired or have been slated for retirement. That is 10% of America's entire fleet. We made major strides towards a Coal-Free NW by getting dates for Oregon and Washington's last coal plants to move beyond coal. Boardman, in eastern Oregon is on the left; off of coal by 2020. TransAlta, in central Washington, is on the right; off of coal by 2025. And TransAlta, represents a path forward towards protecting the environment and workers. The Sierra Club, along with its partners, worked to ensure that the community and workers in Centralia were protected, by negotiating a **\$68 million package in investments to help the community and state** transition to clean energy technologies, including:

- **\$30 million for economic development** and helping Centralia residents and businesses reduce their energy bills.
- **\$25 million for clean energy technologies**

As a result demand for coal has declined in America and Big Coal is now looking to foreign markets to sell their coal.

Slide 4: Map

As proposed, coal would be mined in the Powder River Basin, and then put on rail to be shipped through Washington, going through Spokane, along the Columbia River and up through the I-5 corridor to Longview and/or Cherry Point.

Slide 5: Longview

Millennium Bulk Logistics, a subsidiary of Ambre Energy, has proposed a coal export terminal in Longview. Arch Coal has acquired a 38% stake in the project and presumably would provide the coal.

We uncovered that Ambre Energy misled the local community and decision-makers about the Longview, WA, port development, saying they only planned to ship 5 million tons of coal a year. In truth, their intentions are to ship at least 25 million tons and up to 60 million tons a year from Longview. The company misrepresented its intentions and deliberately attempted to hide the true size of the project from the community. Through our organizing and legal challenges with our allies, Millennium Bulk Logistics withdrew their permit in order to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement that reflects the true volume of coal they intend to export. Currently, there is no permit request filed.

Slide 6: Cherry Point

Peabody Energy, the world's largest coal company, with SSA Marine, the largest terminal operator in the world, proposes to export 24 to 48 million tons of coal per year through the Cherry Point Terminal, making it more than twice the size of [Westshore Terminals at Robert's Bank in the lower mainland of British Columbia](#), currently the largest coal port in North America

SSA Marine tried to circumvent the permit process, by trying to convince the Whatcom county Council that their existing permit for 6 to 8 million tons of potash and grain could be used, with minor revision, for up to 54 million tons of coal. This was a laughable proposition and thankfully the Council agreed and denied that request. But that denial was not enough for SSA Marine, and they tried yet again to use their existing permit to ship coal and again were denied.

Shortly thereafter, SSA Marine was caught illegally clearing sensitive habitat including wetlands and possibly valuable archeological sites. With a slap on the wrists, SSA Marine is now seeking a retroactive permit for their destruction. Luckily, our friends and ally at ReSources has filed intent to sue, in the effort to hold SSA Marine accountable for the illegal clearing.

Slide 7: Coal Exports Threatens our Quality of Life in Port Communities

This is an image of an 80 ton coal terminal in South Africa same size as the proposed port in Longview.

The scale of likely dust emissions at the export facilities planned for the Northwest is unclear. Project developers at Longview and Bellingham are promising to install mitigation devices that they say will control dust, yet it's highly unlikely that the coal dust can be contained entirely. Huge piles of coal will stand outdoors in wind and weather, and frequently be shoveled into new positions by giant bulldozers and other machinery.

A comprehensive 2001 study* of coal dust emissions in Canada estimated that the Westshore Terminal emits roughly 715 metric tons of coal dust a year. And a [recent study by researchers at](#)

[the University of British Columbia](#) found that the concentrations of coal dust in the vicinity of the terminal had doubled during the period from 1977 to 1999.

At their June 14 meeting the District of Port Edward in Canada, just south of Prince Rupert, took Ridley Terminals to task over a massive coal-dust cloud on June 6 that obscured the clear sky and dirtied people's patio furniture and decks. They have been bringing this problem up for years. Ridley Terminals says corporate responsibility is important and has offered to power wash nearby residents home for FREE! How nice of them.

Ridley Terminals facility *already* has sophisticated coal dust suppression technology. And the coal dust problems there are arising from just 8 or 9 million tons of coal. SSA Marine wants to ship 5 times as much coal from Cherry Point, Washington.

The Lamberts Point Coal Terminal in Norfolk, Virginia, which ships 28 million tons of coal annually, is legally permitted to release up to 50 tons of coal dust into the air each year. Black grit from the coal piles commonly coats cars, windowsills, and plants in neighboring communities. Neighbors worry that the dust is responsible for the vicinity's elevated asthma rates.

Slide 8: Coal Exports Threaten our Quality of Life in Rail Communities

Traffic reports from cities such as Burlington and Mt Vernon, estimate that the Cherry Point facility as proposed would result in 18 trains per day through our communities. These coal trains are the largest trains that run, clocking in at 130 cars and 1.5 miles long. The 18 trains per day would equate to approximately one additional coal train every 1.3 hours, all day long, in addition to existing train traffic. Thus, train crossing delays can be estimated to increase between 3-4 minutes and 6-7 minutes every single hour IF trains are evenly spread about day and night.

Slide 9: Coal Exports Threaten our Health

Whatcom Docs, a group of 160 Whatcom County physicians, has released a carefully researched position paper that identifies four major areas of health impacts from the proposed project. This project would increase exposure to diesel particulate matter, coal dust, and noise pollution. The doctors also expressed concern about increased injury or fatality rates, and also noted the potential for delayed emergency medical response capacity due to delay at rail crossings. In addition, pulmonary, cardiac, cancer and safety risks would increase for the local community, with children and the elderly at highest risk.

Coal dust escaping trains and terminals ends up in our neighborhoods and in our lungs. Coal dust contains toxic heavy metals-like mercury, arsenic and lead--and exposure is linked to cancer, birth defects, heart disease, and increased asthma and lung disease in children.

Diesel exhaust emissions will increase with the amount of coal being transported, exhaust contains more than 40 toxic substances including arsenic, benzene, and formaldehyde can cause serious health problems.

Slide 10: Coal Exports Threaten our Safety

The cities of Burlington and Mt Vernon have expressed concerns of delays in emergency services due to the proposed increase in train traffic.

In an article in the Skagit Valley Hearld, Mayor Bud Norris stated, “Since our city is bisected by railroad tracks, if we have an emergency service vehicle on one side and someone who needs assistance on the other, the blockage of the traffic is a concern.”

Scott Thomas, attorney for the city of Burlington, also plans to comment on the proposed facility stating, “As you know, a good portion of our community is on one side of the railroad tracks, and our police and fire stations are on the other side,” Thomas said.

What you can see on the slide is a coal train derailment in Ohio in 2005. Coal dust builds up on the tracks and can prevent water from draining from track beds, which in turn can push steel rails out of gauge and cause derailments.

Slide 11: Coal Exports Threaten our Economy

Many cities along the rail corridor are growing increasingly concerned about the negative impact this project will have on their community. In the same Skagit Valley Hearld article, Mt Vernon Mayor, Bud Norris, states that additional trains through the city could cause traffic problems, which could be detrimental to city business.

Marysville Mayor, Jon Nehring stated in a letter to the *Marysville Globe*, “According to our preliminary analysis, impacts from increased train traffic associated with this project carry severe consequences for our city’s commercial district and downtown-waterfront plans, transportation planning and improvements, and public safety with the risk of more car-train accidents Constant coal train traffic and pollution can impact property value and turn away developers.”

Mount Vernon's riverfront is undergoing a transformation. Abandoned grain silos have been demolished, and a new park and outdoor amphitheater will soon take its place. And the mayor is hoping that will bring more people and business back into the city's downtown.

Bellingham waterfront's redevelopment will transform Bellingham, turning the face of downtown toward its spectacular waterfront and contributing in a significant way toward the vibrancy of the community and the region.

Coal trains do not fit in with the vibrant and beautiful these cities have for their economic redevelopment. They also do not fit in with the regional reputation of this area. Bellingham is known as one of the most sustainable cities in America. The Skagit is known for its highly scenic countryside of working farms and small rural townswith tulips blooming, cows grazing, and through it all the beautiful Skagit River.

Slide 12: Coal Exports Threatens our Climate

Slide 13: Taking on the Myths; “Resistance is Futile”

Coal export proponents have been throwing out a lot of myths, so let’s look at some of them.

Slide 14: Myth, “Won’t Asia get coal elsewhere?”

US coal exports would not supplant the burning of dirtier Chinese coal. Instead, North American exports would add to the volume burned in Asia. In a recent white paper, resource economist Thomas Power demonstrated this point:

This result—that international competition to serve particular import markets will lower the prices that the importing countries have to pay—should not be startling. One of the major benefits of international trade is that it allows countries access to lower cost sources of supply.

In other words, Washington coal exports will not simply displace other coal in the market. Instead, American coal exports will adhere to fundamental economic principles: an increase in supply will bring down market prices and thereby increase total consumption. The extent to which increasing supply will boost demand is debatable—just like the extent to which higher prices would dampen demand—but the direction of the change is clear.

In fact, some underlying dynamics may make US exports even more critical. As Power points out, lower prices may encourage China to build more coal-burning power plants than they otherwise would, an investment that would lock in elevated coal burning and pollution for decades to come.

Slide 15: Myth: “If we don’t ship it here, someone else will.”

Although coal mined in the US accounted for no more than 6 percent of the total volume shipped through BC ports in 2009 and 10 percent in 2010, US coal mining companies appear to have looked at reaching new Asian markets through BC ports.

In January 2011, for example, Arch Coal announced that it had reached an agreement with Ridley Terminals to export 2.5 million metric tons of coal annually from Prince Rupert. In June 2011, Cloud Peak Energy announced an agreement to export an unspecified volume of coal from Westshore over a 10-year period.

Yet big increases in shipments of American coal from British Columbia seem unlikely. Canadian steelmaking coal is in high demand, and it brings significantly higher prices than the Powder River Basin coal. Moreover, to a large extent, BC’s coal ports are structured to handle primarily Canadian coal and other exports.

Finally, space is limited at BC terminals. Expansions planned for BC's coal terminals do not come close to providing enough capacity for the volumes of coal called for by the recent proposals in Washington.

Even if none of the planned new capacity were filled with high-value Canadian coal, and even if all three of BC's coal ports were able to operate year-round at full capacity—two highly unlikely scenarios—the terminals would have less than 28 million metric tons of extra capacity, a small fraction of the 100 million tons or more planned for Washington.

Additionally, Community opposition is growing in Canada against expansion, especially for US Coal. For example the expansion of Crown-owned Ridley Terminal is stalled and tied up in a [legislative and budget wrestling](#) match in British Columbia. Additionally Canadian coal companies are starting to complain about their access to their own ports. [Canadian companies](#) are arguing that federally-owned ports should service [Canadian companies](#) first and US companies second. So how much of that capacity—when or if it is developed—can be used by Powder River Basin coal companies is very much open to debate.

Slide 16: We Deserve Clean and Safe Jobs

Two West Coast port cities have already gambled and lost on coal-export facilities. After investing millions of dollars in infrastructure and setting aside sizeable harbor acreage to coal export facilities, both Portland and Los Angeles watched their promised revenue from coal exports evaporate. The abandoned coal export facilities represented millions in stranded investments and clean-up expenses, not to mention years-long missed opportunities for more durable economic development choice

For the last two years, wind has supplied more US jobs than coal mining, and it is growing every year. Considering that communities that mine, ship and burn coal tend to be poor communities, we should be looking to new clean energy jobs as the building blocks for a sustained and health economy.

Every tax dollar we spend subsidizing, dirty, unhealthy projects such as coal exports, on new rail crossings, new overpasses, relocating fire and medical facilities, and emergency room visits due to illness from trains, is a dollar we are not spending on revitalizing our waterfronts and downtowns, and investing in new clean energy business.

Slide 17: We Must Act Now

The United States has the largest recoverable coal reserves in the world and the Powder River Basin is one of our largest deposits. We have a huge responsibility to keep this coal in the ground. Not succeeding in doing so would mean huge local AND global health, safety, economic, and environmental problems.

Slide 18: What Can I Do?

Please call Public Lands Commissioner Goldmark at (360) 902-1004 and tell him “Thank you for your strong leadership in protecting Washington’s land and clean water. Please don’t use Washington’s public waters for coal export.”

Slide 19: We Can Make a Difference!