

Friends,

As you see below, we gathered at the Eugene City Council to support a vote to oppose coal trains. The Board of Lane County Commissioners is now poised to vote on a bad resolution in support of a coal export terminal in Coos Bay...



I am writing to ask you to please weigh in on the coal train issue, now. The train will pass through not only Eugene, but also the entirety of the Siuslaw Watershed on its way from Eugene to Florence. One coal car carries 100 tons of coal – can you imagine what would happen to salmon spawning grounds if a coal train derailed in the Siuslaw Watershed? Devastation to wildlife and our fisheries!

Please take action NOW – we need your voices to be heard in the upcoming Lane County Commissioners vote on a resolution to approve coal trains!

Here is what you can do. Please either send an email/letter or attend a meeting of the Commissioners next week.

There are **two opportunities for your public testimony** at Board of County Commissioners Meetings. Citizens can speak for 3 minutes and are encouraged to bring five copies of written testimony to share with commissioners.

When: Tuesday Oct. 16

Where: Florence (Florence Events Center 715 Quince Street, Florence, OR)

Time: 3:30 PM

When: Wednesday Oct. 17

Where: Eugene (125 E. 8th Avenue Eugene, OR - Board of County Commissioners Conference Room)

Time: 9:00 AM

Your Goal: 1. Request that commissioners amend the resolution to omit references to coal. Tell them to amend the current resolution to support rural jobs and efficient rail transportation for Lane County products and omit all references to coal and coal exports to protect our

communities from pollution associated with the transport and burning of coal. 2. Demand a *true public hearing* in Eugene during the evening, a time working people can attend.

Governor Kitzhaber, Senator Merkley, dozens of local leaders, and tens of thousands of citizens across the Northwest have called for a cumulative and comprehensive review of the impacts of coal exports, through development of an area-wide Environmental Impact Statement.

You may want to use these points to support your testimony:

- Coal companies want to ship 150 million tons of coal through the Pacific Northwest every year to ship coal to Asian markets.
- We support rail improvements and job growth but we do not support coal export trains or coal export terminals.
- The plans to export coal to Asia would bring 4 coal trains (each approximately 1.5 miles long) through Lane County every day. Rural towns will suffer harm from increased diesel emissions, a known carcinogen. There are robust correlations between these pollutants and cardiovascular and respiratory disease, reproductive health problems, and malignancy. To date, no covered rail cars have been utilized, the technology doesn't yet exist, and we shouldn't count on it.
- The inevitability of a coal train derailment is a serious issue. The Siuslaw River, an important salmon fishery, would be devastated by a train derailment. Hundreds of tons of coal could be dumped into the Siuslaw River or its tributaries from a derailment. Coal dust damages tracks and can lead to derailments. There were 12 derailments of coal trains this summer, with four fatalities of innocent bystanders. There are over 150 water crossings between Eugene and Coos Bay.
- Coal dust harms the tracks, increasing the risk of derailment for other, non-coal bearing trains.
- Because of harmful emissions, Oregon's one coal-burning power plant will be shut down by 2020. But emissions from coal burned in Asia will also cause serious illness right here in Oregon.
- Several recent studies have shown that powerful spring trade winds can carry Asian pollution into the atmosphere above North America. Some of the imported pollution descends to the surface, where it affects ground-level concentrations of ozone, mercury, sulfur compounds and soot. Ground-level ozone can cause severe respiratory problems, including asthma, in susceptible individuals.
- A 2008 study found that Asian emissions of mercury reach as far as Mount Bachelor. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin. Snowpack runoff ends up in our rivers and lakes where the mercury contaminates the fish we eat. Pregnant women and children are particularly vulnerable to the toxic effects of mercury. It is estimated that between 300,000 and 600,000 children are born in the U.S. each year with dangerous levels of mercury in their bodies, putting them at heightened risk for developmental disabilities, mental retardation, seizures, and disturbances of gait and speech. Children, the poor, the elderly, and anyone with a weak or impaired immune system are among the most vulnerable.

HERE IS A DRAFT EMAIL TO SEND AND ADD your personal statement:

Dear Board of Lane County Commissioners,

As you prepare to vote on this resolution, please consider the potential huge negative health and environmental impacts of coal exports. Lane County residents have fought long and hard to improve air quality, public health and our quality of life. Please do not undercut that progress by allowing new huge risks to the health of our families, businesses and communities.

- Please amend the current resolution to support rural jobs and efficient rail transportation for Lane County products and omit all references to coal and coal exports to protect our communities from pollution associated with the transport and burning of coal.
- If coal and/or coal exports are referenced anywhere in the resolution, then the following requirement must be added to the action item: Review of a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment and an area-wide Environmental Impact Statement must occur before any coal export facility or transport is approved by any county, state or federal agency.

E-mails and phone numbers for Lane County Commissioners

Commissioner Handy - North Eugene **541-682-4203**, Rob.Handy@co.lane.or.us

Commissioner Jay Bozievich - West Lane **541-682-4203**, Jay.Bozievich@co.lane.or.us

Commissioner Leiken - Springfield **541-682-4203**, Sid.Leiken@co.lane.or.us

Commissioner Sorenson - South Eugene **541-682-4203**, Pete.Sorenson@co.lane.or.us

Commissioner Stewart - East Lane **541-682-4203**, Faye.Stewart@co.lane.or.us

Thank you for taking the time to protect your health, and that of future generations of people and fish!

Sincerely,

Lisa Arkin
Executive Director
Beyond Toxics