

OPPOSE TRANSPORT OF COAL THROUGH THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE AND EXPORT OF COAL FROM PACIFIC COAST PORTS

FWOC Resolution 12, adopted August 28, 2011

Background: There is an active proposal to transport and export coal mined in the interior of the United States, specifically in the Powder River Basin in northeast Wyoming and southeast Montana, from one or more Pacific coast ports. Export terminals have been proposed at Longview, WA; Morrow, WA; St. Helens, WA; and Coos Bay, OR. The first three of these proposals would involve utilizing a constant stream of coal trains through the Columbia River Gorge.

The company proposing development of a terminal in Longview publicly stated that their terminal would be built to export 5 million tons of coal per year; however recently-obtained documents indicate plans for export of 60 to 80 million tons per year, utilizing 10 one-and-a-half-mile long trains per day.

Residents of Longview have expressed deep concern about the adverse environmental impacts of significant traffic congestion and fugitive coal dust that would result from these coal trains and terminal operation. These impacts would also adversely impact the Columbia River Gorge; in addition there is potential for coal train derailments in the Gorge, which would have adverse impacts on the land, water, and scenic resources of the Gorge.

The cities of Portland, Tacoma, Vancouver, WA, and Kalama, WA, have all rejected proposals to site coal terminals in their communities because of these probable impacts.

The continued use of coal as a fuel source for power plants, whether in the United States or in foreign countries, has significant adverse environmental impacts throughout the world, including the release of air pollutants such as mercury and sulfur and nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere, and the release of substantial amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

The United States should not export these adverse impacts abroad, especially if they involve transport of coal through the Columbia River Gorge.

Resolution: The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs opposes the transport and export from Pacific Coast ports of coal mined in the Powder River Basin and other locations in the interior of the western United States, and strongly opposes transportation of coal for export through the Columbia River Gorge.