

AMBRE ENERGY COAL EXPORT PROPOSAL VIOLATES CLEAN AIR PROTECTIONS IN OREGON

Groups challenge Oregon DEQ decision to issue air permit for proposed coal export terminal

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PORTLAND - The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) failed to protect clean air for Oregon families by issuing an air permit for Ambre Energy's proposed Coyote Island coal export, according to a request to reconsider filed today by the Sierra Club, Columbia Riverkeeper, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Climate Solutions. The groups are seeking reconsideration of the air permit that was issued by the DEQ on February 11, 2014, for Ambre Energy's proposed Morrow Pacific Project. The air pollution permit authorizes Ambre to handle over 8 million tons of coal per year at the Port of Morrow along the Columbia River. A copy of the petition can be found [here](#).

"DEQ got it wrong when they approved the air permit. Today's challenge seeks to protect Oregon families from the threats posed by Ambre's struggling coal export proposal," said **Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director of Columbia Riverkeeper.**

"Dangerous air pollution from toxins like particulate matter and nitrogen oxide has been linked to devastating health conditions like asthma, heart disease, stroke, and even cancer. Across the country, toxic air pollution sends loved ones to the emergency room, keeps our children home from school sick, and prevents workers from staying on the job due to illness. The DEQ's decision to approve an air permit for Ambre's proposed coal facility threatens families with another source of toxic air pollution," said **Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist with Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility.**

According to an independent air pollution model released in 2012, Ambre Energy's proposed 8.8 million ton coal export terminal would exceed clean air standards for toxic nitrogen oxide pollution by up to 700% and for particulate matter pollution by more than 1000%. Included in the study were the emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulate pollution (soot and very fine particulates) from trains, barges, and tugs while onsite at the Morrow facility. The study also included emissions from tugs while unloading the coal, as well as the particulates from the coal itself while sitting onsite in uncovered rail cars.

"The risks of the Morrow Pacific coal project reach beyond the Port of Morrow to places like the Columbia River Gorge, where barges would pollute our air and pose a safety risk to water recreators. We have a moral responsibility to ensure that all communities throughout the Northwest

are safe, health places for generations to come. Coal isn't a part of that picture," **said Rev. John Boonstra, a United Church of Christ clergyperson for environmental justice in Hood River.** More than 3,000 medical professionals and public health advocates have raised concerns about significant risks associated with coal exports and related facilities proposed for the Pacific Northwest. Coal contains toxins like lead and arsenic known to harm human health. In addition to dangerous diesel exhaust from trains, tows and ships, toxic coal dust will threaten air quality and worsen asthma, respiratory illness, and other health problems. 165 Oregon physicians voiced their concerns directly to Governor Kitzhaber in the [Position Statement on Coal Exports from Concerned Oregon Physicians to Governor Kitzhaber](#).

Citizens can ask DEQ to reconsider its decision within 60 days after DEQ issues a permit. The Petitioners are represented by Allison LaPlante and Aubrey Baldwin at Earthrise Law Center.

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BACKGROUND:

Ambre Energy has been plagued by financial questions and has made little progress in obtaining state or federal permits. Last month, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) announced Ambre Energy's proposal to build the coal export terminal will require an additional permit, known as a 401 Water Quality Certification. DEQ received a record breaking 16,500 public comments on Ambre's proposal to export 8.8 million tons of coal through Northwest communities and along the Columbia River. The agency also announced its decision to issue three permits for the coal export project, an air quality permit, a construction storm water permit, and an internal wastewater permit. The State of Oregon also notified Ambre Energy this month that its controversial proposed coal export terminal is located on state-owned land in the Columbia River and now requires a state land lease. The requirement to obtain a state land lease for Ambre Energy's dangerous coal export project is yet another setback to the struggling coal export terminal.

In 2011, a legal challenge to the Ambre proposal in Longview, WA [exposed internal documents](#) showing that Ambre and their US subsidiary Millennium Bulk Logistics lied to Cowlitz County and state officials about the size of their project, claiming it would ship five million tons per year when they planned a project more than 10 times that size. Following the controversy, Ambre withdrew its permit and in 2012 filed a permit for a terminal that would handle 44 million tons of coal/year.