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HUNDREDS SPEAK OUT IN OPPOSITION TO OREGON'S UNSTUDIED COAL EXPORT TERMINAL

Oregon residents increase pressure on governor and state agencies to exercise authority to deny permits for Morrow Pacific project

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Portland, OR-- Today, hundreds raised their voices in opposition to Australian-based Ambre Energy's plan to use Northwest communities and the Columbia River as a conduit for coal shipment to Asia. Ambre Energy, a company with shaky finances and a record of misleading regional residents and agencies, has applied for several permits to build a coal export facility at the Port of Morrow near Boardman, OR, while repeatedly attempting to rush the project along before any study of the plan is conducted.

Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) held the second round of public hearings in Portland and Hermiston regarding a pending air permit for the proposed Port of Morrow coal export terminal. In addition to voicing their concerns with DEQ during the 12 hour hearings, many also participated in an outside "people's hearing." Residents wanted to convey all the reasons, in addition to those related to the narrowly focused air permit, that Governor Kitzhaber should direct the state agencies to reject all permits related to coal exports in Oregon.

"In December, we had to sit in front of this same agency and listen as they told us that concern after concern would not be considered as part of their permit issuance," said Kate McBride, Hood River City Councilor. "At one point, I raised the question about the plans to fight a coal barge fire if one were to occur on the Columbia River. I was told that the plan was to 'let it burn.'"

Ambre Energy is requesting an air discharge permit for its coal terminal and tugboats; both would be in violation of Oregon's air quality standards.

"These pollutants would cause lung problems and aggravates asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis," said Brett VandenHeuvel, executive director of Columbia Riverkeeper in reference to the mono-nitrogen oxide emissions. This kind of pollution can also exacerbate heart disease and even cause premature death. The law and public health concerns require DEQ to deny Ambre Energy's permit request."

After months of local activists shedding light on the threats of the original six coal export proposals, three have been either completely pulled or tabled. With the Gateway Pacific proposal near Bellingham, WA and the Millennium Bulk proposal near Longview, WA going through their own multi-agency studies mandated by the state of Washington, the Morrow Pacific project is the only proposal to not receive a site-specific Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the bare minimum of public environmental review.

On a [pre-hearing telepresser](#) yesterday, City Council President Ben Stuckart of Spokane, WA weighed in on the threats his city and state faces if the Morrow Pacific project is permitted without an Environmental Impact Study. "In Spokane, we're right in the middle of the funnel for train traffic in the Northwest. Our maximum rail capacity is 70 trains per day, which we reach during the summer months. It is bad enough that the Army Corps of Engineers has refused to do an area-wide EIS of all three of the proposals together, it's unconscionable to not do a site-specific study for the Morrow Pacific project." Stuckart added, "Without an EIS, the permit requests for the Morrow project should absolutely be denied."

Hundreds of thousands of Northwest families, business owners, and elected leaders have voiced concerns over the risks posed by exporting the dirtiest fossil fuel there is for Asian consumption. Pointing to threats both locally and globally, increasing numbers of people reject the idea of Oregon becoming a major coal exporter.

"As someone who has worked in the business sector for many years here in Oregon, I have witnessed the role that sustainability plays in attracting talent, growing our Northwest brand, and creating jobs," said Carrie Hearne, an advisory board member of Women in Sustainability and the Environment (WISE), and an Appalachia native. "It is clear to me that coal exports is the wrong direction for our state, as it holds no value in a clean energy economy."

Echoing concerns of economic risks associated with exporting outdated fossil fuels like coal, Greg Stiegel, Executive Director of Columbia Gorge Windsurfing Association says that doubling the number of barges on the Columbia River will negatively impact the wind and water sports experience for all river users. "Columbia Gorge recreation is an industry that brings millions of dollars in added value to our region, which is considered a mecca for these water sports. Permitting coal exports will halt this growth in its tracks."

The DEQ announced today that they are extending the comment period for the air permit from July 12 until August 12. News stories this past week revealed the Ambre Energy has been unable to come up with the \$70 million required to replace Cloud Peak's reclamation bond for the Decker Mine in Montana, and now have an August 30 deadline to complete that transaction or go to pre-trial proceedings. The company also has a September 1 deadline to provide extensive information to the State of Oregon to support their aquatic

lease application after balking several times this spring with providing the additional information requested by the Department of State Lands.

“The governor and state agencies should pay heed to the phrase ‘caveat emptor’ and look twice at this salesman,” said VandenHeuvel. “Ambre Energy is a house of cards that has lied to communities in the past including Longview, Washington residents. Coal export is a bad deal for Oregon and the Northwest, as it would threaten our health, communities, environments, and economy.”