

EMO Resolution on Coal Export Terminals September 19, 2012 (revised October 1, 2012)

Whereas, communities of faith across the religious spectrum share a deep commitment rooted in values of justice and stewardship to protecting the most vulnerable including children, the elderly, the unborn, and those in poor health from environmental health hazards including air pollution and climate disruption.

Whereas, the burning of coal is a harm to public health due to toxic emissions, notably mercury, as well as carbon dioxide, a major contributor to harmful climate disruption which has many serious public health and environmental impacts.

Whereas, the transportation of coal from the Power River Basin of Wyoming and Montana on rail and barge through Oregon and Washington is being proposed to create a new gateway for shipping coal to Asia. On a daily basis, this would entail a significant number of trains loaded with coal coming through the Portland area in addition to coal barges on the Columbia River, that would contribute additional diesel emissions and coal dust to the environment and disrupt the flow of traffic, including for emergency vehicles in areas with at-grade crossings.

Whereas, in the past year, many communities along the proposed routes have either opposed the transportation of coal by train or barge through their community, or requested that the US Army Corps undergo a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) so that the health and community impacts can be adequately known before coal projects move forward.

Whereas, in June 2012, the EMO Board of Directors joined the call for a PEIS.

Whereas, the rules recently enacted to reduce health impacts from coal burning should not encourage industry to provide US coal to areas with less strict air quality standards. As people of faith we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. Knowingly enabling pollution of the air of that global neighbors breathe is morally unacceptable. Also, it is well known that pollution from Asia contributes to pollution in the Pacific Northwest due to the pattern of air currents across the Pacific Ocean.

Whereas, further dependence on cheap, dirty coal slows the transition to clean renewable energy and energy efficiency. Oregon and the Northwest have positioned themselves to be global leaders in clean energy and serving as a coal gateway undermines this leadership.

Therefore, be it resolved that the EMO Board will advocate for full disclosure about the impact of coal transportation on the most vulnerable among us, including those in communities throughout the United States and abroad, and to demand that adequate information be generated and made available to the public on the proposed projects and that adequate opportunity for meaningful public input be given.

Be it further resolved that the EMO Board supports Senator Wyden's request to President Obama that he use his authority under the Energy Policy and Conservation act to create a robust framework around energy exports that considers environmental and economic impacts.