

ID: 11459

Date: 01/22/2013 - 14:46

Name: Kneipp (for Sean Guard, Mayor), Mitchell

Email: mkneipp@ci.washougal.wa.us

Address:

1701 C Street

Washougal, WA 98671

Phone: 360-835-8501 x604

Commenter Type:

Jurisdiction – Other WA State

Part: Rail

Human environment: Air quality, Traffic or safety

EIS process: EIS/regulatory process

Comment:

Greetings.

On March 19, 2012, the Washougal City Council unanimously approved a Resolution calling on the Washington State Department of Ecology, the US Army Corp of Engineers and local county jurisdictions to make the City of Washougal a “party of record” and commenter on the proposed coal export facilities in Bellingham and Longview.

This Resolution, which is attached, is specific to the impact the additional trainloads of coal, estimated to be 20-40 additional trains per day, each train up to 1.5 miles long each. These impacts include the delays that vehicle traffic will have at our five at-grade crossings (concerns of significant vehicle emissions from idling vehicles) as trains move through Washougal and especially delays to our emergency response vehicles should the at-grade crossings be blocked. In addition, the potential impact that loose coal dust will have on our community and environment, whether it blows out of the top of the uncovered rail cars or it seeps out the bottoms of the rail cars.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad has noted themselves that each railcar can lose between 500 – 2,000 pounds of coal product while in transit from the Powder River Basin to Bellingham, over a 1,000 mile trip. My office in city hall is literally 300 feet away from the rail lines and I watch these trains go by on a daily basis.

The City requests that the scoping of the EIS address the significant unavoidable adverse impacts to the City of Washougal, and other communities that these trains will travel through, including but not limited to impacts from; 1) vehicle emissions from idling vehicles at blocked at-grade crossings; 2) emergency response delays at blocked at-grade crossings; and 3) the impact of coal dust on the community and environment. The EIS should address ways to avoid, minimize and mitigate the effects of these impacts on our community.

The City of Washougal does not want to stand in the way of commerce or exports; in fact we applaud companies who are employing people. We just want to make sure that our community and residents will not have any adverse impacts from the transportation of these materials and that any impacts will be reasonably mitigated.

As the Mayor of a community that is literally split geographically by the BNSF rail lines, I will be

reaching out to the Mayors of other communities along the BNSF line to be sure we are kept informed of the progress and mitigations of these projects.

I appreciate any space that you can give to this important issue and I welcome any questions that you may have.

Respectfully,

Sean Guard
Mayor
City of Washougal

PDF Attachment:

[http://www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov/sites/default/files/comment-attachments/pdf/City of Washougal Resolution #1048.pdf](http://www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov/sites/default/files/comment-attachments/pdf/City%20of%20Washougal%20Resolution%20#1048.pdf)

CITY OF WASHOUGAL, WASHINGTON
RESOLUTION NO. 1048

A **RESOLUTION** of the city council of the City of Washougal, Washington, expressing concern regarding the impact of increased rail traffic in Washougal resulting from proposed rail terminal projects in Whatcom County and Cowlitz County and requesting that the principal agencies reviewing the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for said projects, including Whatcom County, Cowlitz County, Washington Department of Ecology and The United States Army Corps of Engineers, include impacts along the train route for freight moving to the proposed terminals in the scoping document for the EIS and that at least one of the EIS Scoping hearings and one of any other subsequent hearings related to the EIS for each project be held in Clark County.

WHEREAS, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) track runs through and bisects both communities of Washougal and Camas running east/west; and

WHEREAS, Washougal has five at-grade crossings and only one grade separated crossing; and

WHEREAS, there are proposed rail terminal projects in Whatcom County (the Gateway Pacific Terminal Project, or GPT) and Cowlitz County (Millennium Project); and

WHEREAS, the proposed projects will significantly increase freight traffic on the BNSF track; and

WHEREAS, the increased freight traffic is intended to be coal being delivered to the new terminals but may potentially include a variety of commodities; and

WHEREAS, this increased rail traffic will have impacts in Washougal and Camas including but not limited to increased traffic congestion and delays to residents and commerce and increased tail pipe emissions from stopped and idling vehicles and;

WHEREAS, Washougal has been made aware of potential impacts from coal dust and other particulates that may be blown from open rail cars but has no way to evaluate such potential impacts; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County, Washington Department of Ecology and the United States Corp of Engineers have entered into an MOU to jointly promulgate the required EIS and are currently scoping the EIS for the GTP project; and

WHEREAS, Cowlitz County is evaluating an application and developing an EIS for the Millennium project and Washington Department of Ecology and the United States Corp of Engineers are also involved; and

WHEREAS, said agencies should include the impacts of this increased rail traffic in the scope of the EIS for each project and public hearings at the various stages of the EIS process should be conducted in Clark County; and

WHEREAS, the City of Washougal wishes to become a Party of Record regarding both projects,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF WASHOUGAL AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I

We urge Whatcom County, Cowlitz County, State Department of Ecology and United States Army Corps of Engineers to include impacts to Washougal, including but not limited to increased traffic congestion and delays to residents and commerce, increased tail pipe emissions from stopped and idling vehicles and potential impacts from coal dust and other particulates that may be blown from open rail cars in the scoping of the EIS for both the GPT project and the Millennium project.

SECTION II

We urge Whatcom County, Cowlitz County, State Department of Ecology and United States Army Corps of Engineers to conduct at least one EIS scoping hearing for each project and at least one of any subsequent hearings related to the EIS for both projects at a location in Clark County.

SECTION III

We request that the City of Washougal be made a Party of Record for both the GPT and Millennium projects.

SECTION IV

That this Resolution shall take effect and be in full force upon passage and signatures hereon.
Dated and signed this 19th day of March, 2012.

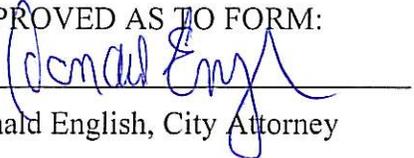
CITY OF WASHOUGAL


Sean Guard, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jennifer Forsberg, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Donald English, City Attorney