

**Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods
Safety and Livability Team and
Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting**

Monday, August 20, 2012, 6:30pm
Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Office
4815 NE 7th Ave., Portland, OR

MINUTES

Present

NECN Land Use and Transportation Committee (LUTC) Members:

George Bruender, Concordia Neighbor, LUTC Co-chair; *Jim Brown*, Alameda Neighborhood Association; *Paul Anthony*, Humboldt Neighborhood Association; *Steve Cole*, Irvington Neighborhood Association; *Carol Gossett*, Sullivan's Gulch Neighborhood Association; *Anjala Ehelebe*, Woodlawn Neighborhood Association;

NECN Safety and Livability Team (SALT) Members:

Chris Lopez, Sullivan's Gulch Neighborhood Association, SALT Chair; *Adam Karol*, Alameda Neighborhood Association; *Rick Sills*, King Neighborhood Association; *Luke Groser*, Woodlawn Neighborhood Association;

Additional:

Jim Barta, Irvington Neighbor; *Dan Serres*, Columbia Riverkeepers; *Michael Newsom*, Woodlawn Neighbor; *Rhonda Sabala*, Woodlawn Neighbor; *Lee Martin*, Woodlawn Neighbor; *Gabrielle Foukes*, King Neighbor; *Bonnie McKinley*, Maplewood Neighbor; *Bethany Wofford*, Woodlawn Neighbor; *Janet Goetze*, Hollywood Star-News; *Belinda Clark*, Concordia Neighbor; *Katy Asher*, NECN staff; *Benjamin Adrian*, NECN staff

Welcome and opening remarks, George Bruender.

George Bruender, co-chair of the LUTC calls the meeting to order and suggests rather than going around the room for introductions, speakers should announce name and affiliation when speaking. Also, George lays out the process of this joint committee meeting. Should a motion be agreed upon, the SALT and LUTC will make a recommendation on the issue to the NECN Board for consideration.

Proposed Coal Exports in the Pacific NW- Dan Serres, Columbia River Keepers.

Dan introduces himself and explains that the Columbia River Keepers first heard of coal exports from the Pacific NW roughly two years ago. Dan gives some of the proposed amounts of coal, 44 million tons each year at Longview, which would require 8 full trains arriving and departing each day.

Another terminal, called the Morrow Pacific Project appears to be the fastest moving proposal. It would export 8.8 million tons of coal a year via trains to Boardman, ships down

the Columbia River and the finally transferred onto ocean barges and sent to Asia. For perspective, the coal powered energy plant at Boardman currently burns 3 million tons of coal each year. Dan says the current proposal includes covered barges and coal storage piles but not covered train cars.

Other proposals include 54 million tons of coal per year out of Bellingham, WA. St. Helens, OR, has a proposal for 30 million tons of coal each year. Coos Bay, OR, has 10 million tons of coal per year proposal, and this proposal would send train cars right through Portland.

Famed environmentalist Bill McKibben recently visited and made the point that "The Pacific Northwest is a strategic choke point for coal." Dan emphasizes that the Columbia Gorge and Portland is right in the center of this choke point.

Dan points out the difference between the Boardman coal plant and new coal plants in China- the Boardman plant currently puts out 800 MW of electricity while new plants in China can be as large as 3,000 MW.

Rail freight infrastructure improvements are needed at certain stretches along Interstate 84 in NE Portland to improve accessibility for the lengthy coal trains, so without improvements, coal trains would come through the North Portland tunnel and go via Swan Island.

How much coal is currently moving through the Gorge? One train a day goes to Centralia, WA and is burned at a power plant.

Dan says certain proposals would significantly impact Linnton, a North Portland neighborhood, and Dan distributes a letter recently passed by the Linnton Neighborhood Association opposing coal exports.

Do coal trains derail? Yes, one just derailed on July 3rd, 2012, in Pasco, Washington.

Much of the coal in Wyoming and Montana is publicly owned.

Mercury? Yes, there is a significant amount of mercury in coal. This is evident in the fish consumption guidelines for the Columbia River. Native tribes are weary of potential impacts of coal exports in this regard.

Dan lays out an overview of the process surrounding coal exports, beginning with the question of scope- such as what questions do we ask about coal exports? Will the Army Corps of Engineers do a comprehensive review? Rail infrastructure funding and where funding sources will be found? Barges on the Columbia River and associated impacts? The state of Oregon is a major decision maker here and Governor Kitzhaber has already asked the Army Corps for a comprehensive review. Dan also points out the past failures of coal export proposals in the Pacific Northwest, which sets a precedent for action today.

Are there pro-export organizations? Such as labor unions? Dan answers yes, Longshormen are in support of the export terminals as are unions in the building trades. Dan points out that in his experience, unionized work forces do increase environmental regulation compliance at the docks and if export terminals do proceed, he'd like to see them employ union labor.

Several health concerns are raised including bioaccumulation of heavy metals such as Mercury. New research in this area is emerging and should be further studied.

List of concerns generated at the meeting:

- Opposing increase in the number of coal trains through the Northwest, particularly Portland and Oregon, for the transportation of coal. Also opposed to barge transit of coal.
 - The emphasis is on the health and livability of N/NE neighborhoods.
- NECN seeks a comprehensive review of proposed coal exports, including a multi-modal transportation analysis, jobs/economic analysis including tourism and recreation.
- NECN requests a task force be assembled to provide a public interest analysis of coal exports at the State and Federal level prior to any coal export approvals are made.
- NECN seeks answer to who would be responsible for transportation infrastructure improvements necessitated by coal exports.
- We resolve that as the nation and state moves off of coal power, we should continue this trend in all regards, including ceasing coal exports to other countries.

Discussion of whom our letter would be going to- Governor Kitzhaber, Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, area Congressmen, the US Army Corps of Engineers, City Council, Metro, and area State Legislators.

George asks for a straw poll to be taken to assess interest among the meeting attendees for consensus on the list of concerns. Unanimous approval of the concerns is found. Chris Lopez asks for SALT and LUTC members to officially vote for a letter and recommendation to be made to the NECN Board based on the listed concerns.

Undertake a Public Interest analysis before any approvals can be granted for coal exports. Kitzhaber has already asked the Corps to do this cumulative analysis. The request to the Governor is to study the area-wide impacts. Not in line with our general principals.

Rick and Benjamin will work on a draft and have Steve Cole edit and present to NECN Board.

Timing- what is the timeline for this project? In the next year, major permitting decisions will be made.

Why doesn't the EPA have design standards for terminals? It depends that coal is not considered toxic. Some standards will apply to certain elements of the terminal, such as the leaking runoff, but not from the trains, commercial regulations apply.

October 2nd at Rose City Park Methodist church, Columbia Riverkeepers will host a truth telling forum "Coal Hard Truth," with experts from various fields.

Meeting Adjourned.