

Washington state deals blow to plan for coal export terminal

Project pitched for Longview

By RACHEL LA CORTE
Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A company that wants to build and operate a large terminal to export coal from the western U.S. to Asia was denied a key permit by Washington state on Tuesday because of environmental concerns.

The Department of Ecology rejected a water quality permit that Millennium Bulk Terminals sought because the proposed facility near Longview would have caused “significant and unavoidable harm” to the environment. The department cited effects to air quality, noise pollution and tribal resources, among others.

“There are simply too many unavoidable and negative environmental effects for the project to move forward,” Ecology Director Maia Bellon said in a statement.

Millennium Bulk Terminals has long hoped to build a facility along the Columbia River to handle up to 44 million tons of coal a year. Trains would carry the coal from Montana, Wyoming and other states, which would be loaded onto ships headed to Asia.

William Chapman, the president and CEO of Millennium, said the company will appeal the decision and expects “a fairer and more consistent interpretation of the law.”



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

The Washington Department of Ecology said Tuesday it rejected a water quality permit that Millennium Bulk Terminals wanted because the proposed facility near Longview in southwest Washington state would have caused ‘significant and unavoidable harm’ to the environment.

“Multiple recent decisions by the agency seem biased against the Longview community, and particularly blind to the need for employment opportunities in Cowlitz County,” he said in a written statement.

Environmentalists, tribes and others have fiercely opposed the project — which could increase U.S. exports of coal by 40 percent — because of concerns about global warming, coal dust pollution and potential damage to fisheries on the river. Several of those groups lauded Tuesday’s decision.

“The state did the right thing today, standing up for clean water, public health and the Pacific Northwest’s iconic endangered salmon runs,” Power Past Coal co-director Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky said in a statement.

Boost local economy

Businesses, some labor groups and other supporters say the project would create jobs, add tax revenue and boost the local economy. The governor of Wyoming, the nation’s leading coal-producing state, previously traveled to the Pacific Northwest to pitch the importance of coal exports to the governors of Washington and Oregon.

Kris Johnson, president of the Association of Washington Business, criticized the process that led to the decision, saying that the project has faced “unprecedented regulatory hurdles.”

“We need companies to invest in manufacturing, construction and infrastructure to support trade,” he wrote in a prepared statement. “Instead of turning away investment, our lead-

ers should be encouraging responsible growth.”

Montana’s attorney general said he plans to review the decision to make sure the law has been followed.

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said that despite Washington’s decision, “Wyoming will continue to work towards a plan that allows for the safe transportation of coal through coastal ports.”

An environmental review released in April by Washington’s ecology department and Cowlitz County analyzed potential harm to fish habitat, wetlands, water quality, local communities and more. Of 23 environmental areas, 19 would face harmful effects, and some could not be offset or reduced, officials said at the time.

The review found that coal dust pollution from trains would not be major because emissions levels would be below state and federal standards, but pollution from locomotives would raise the cancer risk for one low-income neighborhood.

Noise and traffic

Residents also would see more noise and traffic delays at rail crossings without a quiet zone or other measures, the study said. At full capacity, the project would add 16 more trains through the area and increase the number of ships by 1,680 a year.

Gov. Jay Inslee said he was confident that state ecology officials “based their decision on sound science and in accordance with the law.”

Warrenton searching for replacement for public works director

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — Warrenton is on the hunt for a new public works director.

Jim Dunn, who held the position for just over a year, put in his notice in early September. His last day with the city was Sept. 14. City Engineer Collin Stelzig has taken over as interim public works director until the city hires a replacement.

As public works director, Dunn oversaw the city’s largest department, with 19 full-time employees. The department is responsible for collecting and treating wastewater, providing drinking water, maintaining sewer and stormwater systems as well as the city’s dikes and 10

miles of levees. The department also oversees sanitation and recycling services and maintains trails and streets.

City Manager Linda Engbretson said she is in the middle of looking over the job description and talking with staff about the qualities they desire in the next public works director.

The city is juggling multiple development projects with its small staff and Engbretson said it is important to get someone in place soon. But, she added, “I really want to make sure I do this right. ... We want to make sure we get the right person.”

Though Engbretson has long been involved in the hiring process during her time with the city, this will be her first department head hire as city manager.

Man goes missing while picking mushrooms

Associated Press

TILLAMOOK — Authorities from multiple agencies are searching for a 49-year-old man who was reported missing after he didn’t return from picking mushrooms in the Tillamook State Forest.

KGW-TV reported Michael Scott Lund was reported missing by a friend Monday.

The Tillamook County Sheriff’s Office says Lund was in the area of Drift Creek

Forest Road about 30 miles east of Tillamook.

Lund was described as a 5-foot-10, 220-pound white man with brown hair and blue eyes. He was last seen wearing a gray flannel shirt, tan pants and a baseball hat.

The sheriff’s office says Lund doesn’t have food or water for an extended stay in the wilderness.

Lund’s family says he doesn’t suffer from health or psychological issues.

Oregon lodging lobby sues Bend over tourism budget use

Associated Press

BEND — An Oregon lobbying group and two hotels are suing Bend claiming the city violated state law by using a portion of its budget earmarked for tourism marketing on street repair.

The Bulletin reported

that the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association filed the lawsuit Tuesday as a result of the Bend City Council’s decision in May to spend about \$350,000 of the \$3.5 million budgeted for tourism on road maintenance.

Association President

Jason Brandt says state law prohibits the city from decreasing the amount it spends on tourism as the state requires a certain percentage of room taxes to go to tourism marketing.

Assistant City Attorney Ian Leitheiser says the city’s actions comply with state

law as the tourism marketing allocation is above the 30 percent requirement.

In Astoria, the city has used tourism promotion money to help pay for park maintenance and related services, arguing that tourists use city parks and other resources.

Groups sue Washington state to stop wolf kills

Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Two conservation groups have filed a lawsuit that seeks to stop Washington state from killing more wolves.

The lawsuit was filed by The Center for Biological Diversity and Cascadia Wildlands in Thurston County Superior Court.

It asserts that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s killing of wolves in two packs in the northeastern part of the state relied on a faulty protocol and failed to undergo required environmental analysis.

According to the lawsuit, Fish and Wildlife officials adopted a revised “wolf-live-stock interaction protocol” in June for determining when to kill wolves in response to live-stock conflicts.

The lawsuit claims the protocol provided for the state to kill wolves more quickly than in prior years and was adopted without public input or environmental review, in violation of the state’s Environmental Policy and Administrative Procedure Acts.

“Reasonable minds can differ on when we should and should not be killing wolves, and whether the killing of the wolves in these two packs was justified,” Nick Cady, legal director for Cascadia Wildlands, said in a news release. “But there is no question that we should be fully analyzing the efficacy of these actions, welcoming public and scientific input, and be able to hold the state accountable.”

Agency spokesman Bruce Botka said officials haven’t had the opportunity to review the lawsuit and don’t have an immediate response.

Officials have said previously that they authorize incremental lethal control of wolves in accordance with established protocols after nonlethal prevention techniques fail.

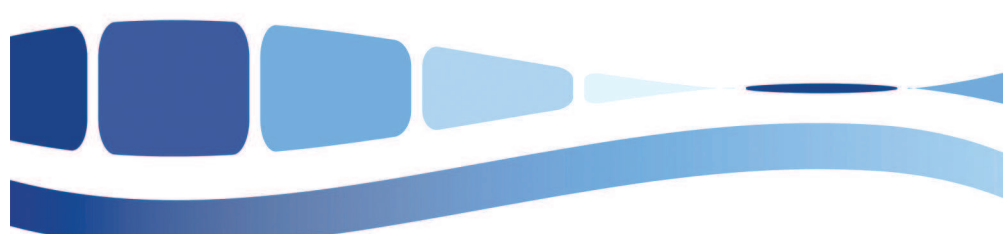
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Jennifer Lycette, MD
Oncologist

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