

From: [Gini Paulsen](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Julie Underwood](#)
Subject: Global warming and coal
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To: Mayor McGlashan, and Shoreline Council Members Eggen, Hall, McConnell, Roberts, Salomon, & Winstead, and City Manager Underwood

We have been warned repeatedly over the past several years about the increase in CO2, now reported to be worldwide at approximately 395ppm. Global warming is mainly the result of CO2 levels rising in the Earth's atmosphere. Both atmospheric CO2 and climate change are accelerating. Climate scientists say we have only years, not decades, to stabilize CO2 and other greenhouse gases to prevent even more devastating environmental catastrophes, as UW Prof. Peter Ward discusses and describes in his book

[THE FLOODED EARTH](#). The website below reveals how sharply CO2 levels have increased over the past half century.

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In the Seattle Times, Wed, Jan 9th, 2013 A2 news, it was reported that 2012 was the hottest year on record in the contiguous US. There were 16 months of consecutive warmer temperatures, which included droughts that engulfed 61% of the nation, killed corn, soybean, grain, peanut and other crops, led to the slaughter of large herds of beef and raised food prices considerably. According to the latest report, food prices will increase by another 3% due to the 2012 drought. I find buying foods of all kind much more expensive in the last several years.

The costs of just 11 disasters in 2012 in the US exceeded a threshold of \$1 BILLION. I am not sure if this includes the huge damage caused to the NY and NJ seacoasts by Super Storm Sandy in November 2012. The most recent estimated costs, as reported by Huffington Post, are as follows: **New York is seeking \$42 billion in federal aid, including about \$9 billion for projects to head off damage in future storms. New Jersey is seeking nearly \$37 billion in aid, including \$7.4 billion for future projects.**

Clearly, the states of New York and New Jersey are unable to pay the costs of repair, replacement, restoration, and/or renovation to individuals and businesses who suffered such extensive damages caused by this Super Storm. Nor are these states able to pay for the costs of prevention of future disasters which are highly likely to occur. As well, **Congress may not be able to provide these requested funds.**

Global warming is caused primarily by humans releasing greenhouse gases, especially CO₂, most notably by burning fossil fuels such as petroleum products and by coal. It is increasingly clear that the federal government lacks funds for the continuing environmental disasters caused by global warming. Therefore, we must, each and all -individuals, businesses, corporations and governments - do everything we can to prevent any further increases in global warming as soon as possible. **AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE**, especially when the cure is not affordable, and that may not be effective, that is sufficient.

The **sources of CO₂** are either natural (from release of methane by farm animals, for example) or by humans burning fossil fuels such as petroleum products and coal. One estimate is that 45% of all CO₂ is released by cars burning petroleum. Another estimate is that a similar percentage is contributed by burning coal.

Greenpeace's website states that "**Coal is the most polluting of all fossil fuels and the largest single source of global warming pollution in the world.**" To curb global warming pollution to the levels needed to minimize the risk of catastrophic global warming, we must end our use of coal in the U.S. within the next 30-40 years. **COAL IS NOT CLEAN. Nor can it be cleaned.** Sequestering CO₂ underground, or in the sea is and will be prohibitively expensive, and this at a time when there are large demands on governmental revenues at all levels. Despite claims that there exist technological devices to clean it technology such as that proposed by Carbon, Capture and Storage (CCS) is a false hope according to Greenpeace.

China is regarded as the biggest user of coal. The coal trains coming from Wyoming and Montana, transversing Washington State, East to West, and then to ports on Puget Sound, will be shipped to China.

The consequences to shipping coal on trains coming from WY and MT, through WA state include extensive pollution of the atmosphere, water and land. Coal dust on open trains does not just stay there. It seeps into the air, falling in minute particles onto the water and land. Puget Sound is already heavily polluted, despite ten years of efforts and millions of dollars to clean it up, unsuccessfully. Given the heavy rains we have been experiencing along and on the BNSF RR tracks just a single accident resulting in the derailment of coal trains would be an unmitigatable environmental disaster, further and probably permanently polluting the Puget Sound. If a port is constructed at Bellingham and Grays Harbor, an accident at these and other oceanside ports would also pollute the Pacific Ocean.

Falling on the land coal dust seepage jeopardizes crops, including vegetable, fruit, grains and grass on which farm animals feed, habitats of bees and other pollinators on which we depend for pollination of grains, fruits, and vegetables, thus jeopardizing our survival.

There are also adverse health effects to these coal trains, since particulate matter gets into the lungs. Miners die from lung disease caused by inhaling coal dust. Damage to the lungs also affects, adversely, heart functioning, brain capability and other physiological systems and organs. As someone suffering from pulmonary fibrosis, I can tell you that you do not want to get a lung disease in which your lungs are packed with coal or any other type of dust (e.g., asbestos.) Such disease seriously impairs functioning. As well, it is children and older persons who are most

likely to be harmed by coal dust.

There are other adverse consequences to coal trains transversing Washington State. This includes disruption of usual activities. The frequent, slow moving, long coal trains take a long time to cross any given point. This disrupts normal traffic from one side of the RR tracks to another. The cities of Edmonds and Seattle illustrate this. Coal trains, if not prevented, will severely disrupt ferry traffic, both traffic attempting to board the ferries and traffic disembarking from the ferries. The delays will be onerous, and seriously and extensively disruptive, with substantial economic hardships.

Further, access of public safety vehicles - Fire, Police, Medic 1 - will be seriously hampered, jeopardizing lives and property, if coal trains are allowed. Lives, both private and public, and property will be lost because coal trains prevent necessary traffic from crossing the RR tracks.

A cost/benefit analysis to individuals, businesses, and governments, in both the short and long term indicate that the short term benefits of a few number of permanent jobs and revenues generated by these coal trains will be far less than the enormous costs that will be incurred if the coal trains are allowed. This is because the damages caused by coal trains, which will result in enormous shipments of coal to China, where burning coal will increase CO₂ in the atmosphere, and then global warming, will be too expensive to remedy or repair.

The primary beneficiary of the coal trains in Washington State will be BNSF and its owners, and the owners of the coal fields in Montana and Wyoming, and the huge financial gains to these entities will be at the expense of residents, citizens, businesses and governments in WA State. We cannot allow and cannot afford to have a single industry profit while imposing huge costs on the land, waters and residents of states outside the boundaries of WY and MT.

For these various reasons Coal trains from WY and MT must be terminated and not allowed into this state, and especially not allowed to go to China. Otherwise, there will be a boomerang effect on our lives and on this state that will be devastating. Prof Peter Cook in **THE FLOODED EARTH** (which I urge each and all of you to read) describes the consequences of increased global warming, will include rising, warming and increasingly acidic seas, lethal to marine life, and ultimately to our survival. Storm surges at high tides will destroy private property, both residences and businesses, as happened recently in West Seattle, and at Whidbey and Camano Islands.. The costs of repair and renovation, as well as prevention of such disasters, will be too severe, too frequent for either private parties or governments to remedy and to prevent.

The only way to respond at this time is to prevent and prohibit any and all coal trains from entering and transversing Washington State, such that coal is not shipped overseas to China or other nation for them to burn.

I urge members of the Shoreline City Council and the City Manager to listen and learn, and to take a strong stand in prohibiting coal trains in Shoreline, in King County and in Washington State. I also recommend that the City Council and its Manager request Gov Jay Inslee to have WA State AG Bob Ferguson initiate lawsuits against BNSF, against the owners of the WY and MT coal fields and mines and against China in order to mitigate the extensive damages caused by

global warming due to burning coal.

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