

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **Columbia Riverkeeper Challenges the Army Corps' Refusal to Provide Coal Export Documents**

Portland, OR - Columbia Riverkeeper is going to court to obtain public documents, which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) improperly withheld, about the impacts of coal export.

“The federal government has an obligation to be transparent and not hide information,” stated Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director of Columbia Riverkeeper. “The public wants to know why the Corps is taking shortcuts for the Morrow Pacific coal export terminal.”

Since its announcement, the Morrow Pacific coal terminal has stirred public controversy and prompted widespread calls for a thorough review of the project's impacts. Governor Kitzhaber, the Washington State Department of Ecology, the National Marine Fisheries Service, dozens of elected officials, and over 15,000 citizens asked the Corps to prepare a thorough Environmental Impact Statement.

“The Corps is conducting a full Environmental Impact Statement for the Longview and Cherry Point coal proposals,” VandenHeuvel stated. “It makes no sense to treat the Morrow Pacific Project differently.”

The Morrow Pacific coal export project proposes to ship coal via train from Montana and Wyoming to Boardman, Oregon, where the coal would be loaded on to barges and shipped to Port Westward near Clatskanie, Oregon. From there, the coal would be transferred to ocean-going ships bound for Asian coal-fired power plants. The Corps should analyze the impacts of coal's toxic pollution to public health, how ships and barges will disrupt river users, and the pollution caused by burning the coal in Asian power plants.

On November 2, 2012, Riverkeeper sent a FOIA request to the Corps asking for information about the Corps' decision to prepare a less rigorous review. Nearly ten months later, the Corps has not produced all the public documents. Today Riverkeeper asked the United States District Court for the District of Oregon to require the Corps to comply with the law and produce the public documents.

Riverkeeper is represented by Chris Winter at the Portland-based Crag Law Center.

Riverkeeper's complaint and other legal documents are available here:

<http://columbiariverkeeper.org/top-stories/riverkeeper-challenges-the-army-corps-refusal-to-provide-coal-export-documents/>

**About Columbia Riverkeeper**

Columbia Riverkeeper's mission is to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. Representing a diverse coalition of members and interests, Columbia Riverkeeper works to restore a Columbia River where people can safely eat the fish they catch, and where children can swim without fear of toxic exposure.