

**MILLENNIUM BULK TERMINALS-LONGVIEW  
HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOCUS GROUP  
OCTOBER 27, 2015, LONGVIEW, WA**

**Focus Group No. 1 Summary**

The Cowlitz County Department of Building and Planning, in conjunction with the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is undertaking an environmental review of the Millennium Bulk Terminals – Longview project. As part of this overall process, the County and Ecology, with assistance from the Cowlitz County Health and Human Services Department and the Washington State Department of Health, are also preparing a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). Local stakeholders were invited to participate in a focus groups designed to develop recommendations for the HIA public scoping process and general approach.

Fourteen stakeholders participated in a focus group held Tuesday, October 27, 2015, at the Cowlitz County Health Department. Dr. Jennifer Vines, Health Officer with Cowlitz County Health Department, welcomed participants and introduced the team. Ms. Elaine Placido, Director of Cowlitz County Department of Building & Planning, presented an overview of the Millennium Bulk Terminals – Longview project followed by Mr. Rad Cunningham, an epidemiologist with the Healthy Community Design Division of Environmental Public Health, Washington State Department of Health, who discussed HIAs. Mr. Michael O'Neill, healthy communities lead with Cowlitz County Health & Human Services, facilitated a group discussion on project benefits and concerns that are listed below.

**New Jobs**

- Improves health with worker/family access to healthcare
- Increased tax revenue
- Will the + 138 jobs be filled by locals or will MBTL employees be transferred?
- Will there be training for jobs or are they recruiting from outside of the community?
- Do these jobs pose a health risk to workers?
- How is “family wage” defined monetarily?
- Each job brings additional or “induced” jobs
- What is the employee profile of these jobs (gender/age/education/union)?
- What are the benefits for these positions?
- Are jobs full-time or part-time?
- What type of family support does MBTL offer?
- What are the expected number of jobs per acre?
- Does this project displace the potential for other jobs?
- Can the current infrastructure/schools/services (new residents) support the influx of workers?

## **Train Traffic**

- Impact on businesses/access to businesses
- Tracks splits jobs/low income areas
- More noise

## **Ships**

- Impact on river traffic
- Incoming – water issues (invasive species/disease vectors)

## **Services**

- Increase in tax base will give emergency responders more resources
- MBTL site improved via clean-up of prior use
- Trains could impact emergency response times

## **Health Hazards**

- Coal dust
- Blow off
- Control dust explosion in confined spaces
- Impacts on Highlands Neighborhood with existing low health concerns: asthma/respiratory problems and heart disease
- Concerned that an increase in train traffic and engines will bring more exposure to diesel particulates

## **Education**

- What will MBTL do to reach out/inform?
- Share data from other communities
- Monitor long-term impacts to water and air quality

## **Coal**

- Acidity
- Rain/runoff
- Blow off – use of surfactant to the surface of the loaded coal to mitigate
- What are the impacts of leaching to marine life and crops that people eat (impact to consumer)?

## **Community**

- Divisive community issue that could impact mental health
- What is MBTL doing to engage the community?
- Longevity – What if MBTL leaves?
- Fact versus emotion
- There are current respiratory health issues; local tobacco use has increased
- Mitigation: Could increasing concern equal increased activity/potential problem solving?

## **Research Communities with Similar Coal Transfer Operations**

- What are the impacts over time?
- What can we learn from them?

## **Individual Health**

- Include/assess

## **Fisheries**

- Water quality is key to salmon and smelt
  - Will there be a negative perceptions that could impact the fishing industry: e.g. “fish from a coal impacted river” versus “fresh fish?”
  - Increased shipping channel impacts
  - Healthy fisheries are part of a healthy community

## **Community Perception**

- Will becoming a “coal town” negatively impact our image, property values, and/or desirability?

## **Cleanup Costs**

- If MBTL closes, what are the future resources to clean up the site?

## **PRIORITIZATION EXERCISE**

Participants prioritized topics by importance. They were given three dots and allowed to spend them all one concern/opportunity or spread across several of the items listed by the group. Here is the ranking/vote tally:

1. New jobs (15 votes)
2. Fisheries (8)
3. Community (7)
4. Coal (5)
5. Health Hazards (5)
6. Community Perception (2)
7. Education (2)
8. Individual Health (2)
9. Research Similar Coal Communities (2)
10. Services (2)
11. Ships (2)

## **PARTICIPANTS**

- Carlos Carreon, Director, Health & Human Services, Cowlitz County Health Department
- Dian Cooper, CEO, Family Health Center\*
- Jeane Conrad, PeaceHealth St. John Medical Center\*
- Ken Dale, Community Health Partners
- Bryce Divine, Longview Commercial Fisherman Representative\*
- Gary Fredericks, County Director, WSU Extension Longview\*

- Steve Kutz, Cowlitz Indian Tribe\*
- Dave LaFave, Cowlitz County Fire Chief's Association
- Jason Lundquist, President, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 21\*
- David McClay, CEO, Columbia Wellness
- Mary Jane Melink, Executive Director (City Council), The Health Care Foundation\*
- Rev. Kathleen Patton, St. Stephens Episcopal Church\*
- Ted Sprague, Cowlitz Economic Development Council\*
- Neil Agren, Cowlitz County Fire Chief's Association\*

\*Volunteers willing to be members of the proposed MBTL HIA Steering Committee