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Kinder Morgan Decision: A Victory for Public Health

Kinder Morgan’s decision to abandon plans to build a coal export terminal on the Columbia River at St Helens is welcome news. Coal is the dirtiest, most dangerous fossil fuel. Coal exports through the Pacific Northwest would create new sources of disease and death.

Coal pollutants include heavy metals toxic to fetuses and contribute to four of the five leading causes of mortality in the U.S.: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and respiratory diseases. Burning coal contributes to global warming, which the World Health Organization estimates kills up to 3 million people/year worldwide.

The Kinder Morgan decision translates into healthier air and water for Oregonians. It means there will be fewer patients with asthma, lung cancer, heart disease, strokes, and sleep disorders in affected communities, and that ambulance and fire department response times will not be dangerously increased. We can all celebrate a victory for public health.

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