

## **Talking Points—Town Hall Meeting on Oil and Coal Trains May 27, 2015**

- Welcome to Mukilteo
- Brief description of sustainable elements of City Hall and general vision of a sustainable, well-run city
- City position regarding Coal and Oil Trains
  - The City Council has passed resolutions on both coal and oil trains calling for rigorous environmental review and evaluation of safety risks
  - Oil Train resolution called for state and federal action to improve the safety of rail cars and better tools for first responders to prepare for emergencies
- Emergency Preparedness
  - Mukilteo has a good working relationship with BNSF, cooperate on landslide issues, law enforcement partnership to enforce pedestrian safety around tracks
  - BNSF invited several members of the Mukilteo Fire Department to a specialized training in Colorado regarding oil train emergency response
- The best way to prevent a disaster is to avoid the risk all together
  - The risks to public safety and the risks to our climate have led me to the conclusion that we should not export more oil and coal to be burned elsewhere
  - That is why I have joined 160 other elected officials from five states and Canada as a member of the Safe Energy Leadership Alliance, which is chaired by King County Executive Dow Constantine
- What can local leaders do to impact oil and coal trains
  - SELA provides a unified voice for elected officials to receive updates and alerts when our voices matter
    - One example is the current environmental review of the Tongue River Rail proposal in Montana, which would provide a critical rail link between the Powder River Basin coal deposits and export facilities.
      - Leaders from across the region are commenting and participating in the review of a project in Montana
      - This would be difficult to arrange without an organization like SELA
    - SELA also provides a forum for tribal intergovernmental engagement, like a recent Seattle University event that was hosted by the Lummi Nation

and brought together community members and tribal leaders to discuss the proposed coal terminal in Whatcom County

- My job as Mayor is to protect the health and well-being of our community. I will continue to use my voice to advocate for a sustainable future for Mukilteo, free of fossil fuels.

## **INFO FOR Q&A**

### **Upcoming SELA activities:**

There are a number of opportunities for the Mayor or City staff to participate in SELA activities in coming months, here is a partial list:

- June 12: Quarterly SELA meeting in Tacoma
- June 17: Remote public comment for Tongue River Railroad proposal in Montana, which would connect Powder River Basin coal deposits to rail infrastructure and enable coal exports through a proposed terminal at Cherry Point
- September 25: Quarterly SELA meeting in Vancouver, BC
- TBD: Public comment opportunity in Ferndale regarding the coal export terminal proposal

### **SELA Strategy**

The Alliance has focused on two primary strategies to implement the vision, mission and goals:

- Propose and pass legislation at the federal level and in the five states with SELA members
  - Federal legislation has been introduced by US Senator Maria Cantwell to improve rail safety
  - State legislation has been signed into law in Washington (HB 1449) to improve oil by rail safety
  - Legislation is pending in Oregon and has been introduced in Montana to address rail safety
- Fully utilize the regulatory process to ensure full scrutiny of oil and coal export proposals
  - SELA members have vigorously participated in state and federal environmental review of multiple rail, coal and oil project proposals

### **Accomplishments!**

On May 21st, Skagit County Superior Court dismissed Shell Oil Refinery's appeal of a hearing examiner decision requiring an environmental impact statement for their proposed oil-by-rail expansion. This decision follows the Skagit County Hearing Examiner's February 2015 ruling that Shell's proposed project posed a significant risk of harm to people, water and wildlife.

The April 2015 "Coal Market Report" by Greenpeace USA, Sightline Institute, Climate Solutions and Sierra Club neatly summarized SELA's impact on recent discussions of coal and oil proposals: "Safe Energy Leadership Alliance: One of the biggest political developments in recent months related to these issues has been the growth of a coordinated effort by state and local elected officials in the region to increase scrutiny and regulatory attention relating to the risks and potential health, safety, environmental and economic impacts relating to coal and oil rail traffic through their communities."