



Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

A Division of the Rail Conference — International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Washington State Legislative Board

Workplace Safety, Health, and Education

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Engineers and Trainmen: ‘No Health Issues Related To Coal Dust’

The Washington State Legislative Board of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is concerned about deceptive tactics being used against major infrastructure projects in the State, said its chairman, Mike Elliott.

Proposals for major bulk export terminals are being considered in Longview and Whatcom County. These projects will generate thousands of union jobs and desperately needed tax revenues for state and local governments. The first commodity to be exported will be coal, to be transported by rail from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming.

“The public is being misled about trains and coal,” said Elliott. “Our union knows more about these issues than the Sierra Club, and we can’t stand idly by while they scare people with misleading information and take jobs away.”

“I have worked in, on, and around trains and rail equipment for over 17 years all across Washington State,” Elliott said. “I am active in our union and in the labor community. Recently, there has been a lot of misleading information circulated regarding coal trains and the transportation of coal by rail---namely coal dust. I can tell you for certain I have never experienced or heard complaints of coal dust from trains in Washington State.

“None of my members, who operate and work around coal trains 24/7, have reported health issues related to coal dust. This is a non-issue as far as our organization is concerned. In fact, ensuring our members have a safe and healthy work environment is our highest priority. If the trains we work on and around carried anything that posed a health risk to my membership or the community, you could be certain that I would be taking action to correct the problem.

“Actually, the greatest risk to my membership – and the Washington State community at large – is this misinformation campaign. The truth is rail is one of the most environmentally sound ways to ship goods in our country, and we have been shipping coal, grain, and many other commodities safely and cleanly every day for decades.



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But with all the fear and misinformation being spread around, people are getting the wrong idea, that somehow we need less rail transportation. In fact, we should be supporting more rail transportation projects that strengthen our supply chain across America. We're going to get the truth out about rail transportation and fight back against these types of attacks on our jobs."

Mike Elliott, Chairman