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Commenter: Rita Jankowski-Bradley

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Submission Text

Rita Jankowski-Bradley

510 East Kent Avenue, Missoula, Montana

My name Rita Jankowski-Bradley. I live at 510 East Kent Avenue, Missoula. I'm a member of Community Action for Justice in America's African Asia and we frequently collaborate with Blue Skies campaign because we really believe in the work they do.

All my professional life I worked in healthcare, in many diverse settings. In the area of public health, I served on the county board of health in Butte, Silver Bow along with the pediatrician co-chair the low lead advisory committee and served on a state lead advisory committee. Lead found in coal dust as well as for mining activities is the significant public health issue.

Coal trains along the rail lines where families live pose real health threats in terms of coal pollution, diesel fumes, and from diesel exhaust loaded by trains and also noise pollution. Coal dust particulates contain heavy metal toxic at low levels such as lead, mercury, nickel, tin, cadmium, antimony, arsenic, as well as radio isotopes with folium and strontium.

These metals had been identified as causing neurological problems in children as well as cancers, birth defects, and other ailments. These fine invisible dust particles, which are less than 2.5 microns can be extremely dangerous as they can be inhaled and lodged more deeply in the lungs where they cannot be expelled. Therefore, long-term exposure increases the risk of health problems.

Epidemiological research suggests there's no threshold that it is safe to breathe coal dust. This conclusion is supported by the World Health Organization and several research studies. In addition, the World Health Organization considers diesel exhaust a carcinogen and the soot from diesel exhaust can worsen lung and cardiovascular disease and has been linked to asthma as well.

In 2009, a representative from BNSF, a rail company, testified before Federal Review Board that 645 pounds of dust escapes from each coal train during a 400 mile trip. Since his testimony, coal companies have been required to apply surfactant agent to the trains before they leave the mines. This is supposed to keep 85% of dust from escaping, yet 15% remains or approximately 97 pounds per car.

The Sierra Club contends that surfactants don't ensure that coal dust won't escape and that chunks of the topsoil can fall off during transport. The coal companies basically is telling us that they don't care about the health impacts of the remaining 97 pounds of coal dust from each car, which are serious. They have chosen not to cover the trains as well.

Public health officials in Washington and Oregon states have raised concerns about coal dust and called for more sampling research and monitoring. Wind, rain and hot weather all play a role in how the dust behaves.

The director of the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory at the University of California Berkeley said, "We are seeing significant health and ecological impacts in coal intensive regions. Evidence about human health effects should be used to help determine the true cost and benefits of different energy technologies. The social cost of carbon

should be weighed heavily when developing policies governing the mining, transport, and use of coal. This is pure and simple,” he said.

The state of Montana should address these concerns regarding severe adverse health impacts and environmental as well before allowing the mine project. The Surface Transportation Board should hold the public hearing in Missoula as part of the review. In reality, the Department of Environmental Quality should monitor coal dust on the ground and in the air from current trains before approving any increase. In fact, monitoring of coal dust needs to be continuous and publicly available.

Coal pollution is a real public health concern. In Montana, no child or family or neighborhood should bear the burden of risk. No child is less important. We feel there should be justice along the tracks especially for the sake of the children. Thank you.