

I am a physician, Professor and Canada Research Chair in Preventive Medicine and Population Health at UBC, and I bring that expertise as a citizen to my two comments here.

First, I fully support our provincial health officers' assessment that Port Metro Vancouver's report on coal and health does "not meet even the most basic requirements of a health impact assessment".

In my field of medicine, if we received such a consultation from experts like our health officers and responded as Robin Silvester (Port Metro Vancouver's President and CEO) did, we'd be rightfully sued for malpractice. For him to state that "there has been a very thorough environmental review process by one of the world's leading toxicology experts and the Port is confident the coal dust levels are acceptable and safe" suggests either incompetence or indifference to human life.

And second, not only does the Port's report fail to thoughtfully examine the copious evidence showing the immediate effects of coal transport on human health in BC, it completely fails to account for the longer-term BC and global health effects of using the product (coal) as directed (for combustion).

It is not just the acute local costs that exceed any slender temporary local gain: the long-term health effects of this coal in BC and beyond are dire and must also be considered. For anyone to whom this basic epidemiologic principle is unclear, it is amplified in the new BC Public Health report recommending that BC "increase the role of the public health sector overall in proactively addressing and responding to the health effects of climate change." This government-commissioned document recommends that we proactively address the health effects of climate change, and stopping carbon transport and incineration is the primary opportunity to do so.

Doing otherwise is an assault on Canadians' and others' well-being, and ethically indefensible.

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