

A proper Environmental Impact Assessment of coal export expansion would consider the impact of those coal exports on global warming.

Dramatic expansion of coal-fired power plants is found by all leading international analysts to be inconsistent with the 2 C limit in global temperature our political leaders promise to strive for. For this reason, I agreed to sign my name to a statement by leading researchers on the urgent need for no new coal plants, anywhere in the world, unless they capture and store the carbon pollution. We can no longer allow the construction of new, unabated coal plants and the coal export terminals that would support them. Read the press release [here](#), and the full report [here](#).

Today, without regulations here and abroad requiring carbon capture and storage, expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure like coal plants and coal export terminals can only mean increasing carbon pollution and hence global warming.

Yet (as I wrote in the [Vancouver Sun in July 2013](#)) there are many people seeking rapid expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure — usually for personal benefit. They spend time and money inundating the public with rationalizations that neatly divert us from the critical outcome of their actions — an acceleration of global warming and the grievous harm that follows.

The current effort to develop and expand coal ports on the west coast of North America is one such case. While some opponents of coal port expansion focus on local harms, like coal dust, others argue that most of the carbon in the coal will be emitted as carbon pollution, whether the coal is burned to make electricity or steel – thus accelerating global warming.

This elicits several clever rationalizations, one of which is to point out that the coal will be used to make the steel we need for windmills, electric cars and other technologies to stop global warming. So let's rapidly expand those coal mines, coal ports and coal exports to the steel mills of Asia. It almost sounds like a noble sacrifice for the greater good.

We do not need to shut down today's coal mines or coal port facilities. The people working in the industry and at our existing coal ports will keep their jobs. But we should not be aiding and abetting the rapid expansion of havoc-creating carbon pollution here or abroad by increasing our production and shipping of coal until we and others are only using the coal in ways that don't increase carbon pollution.

It will not be easy to get other countries to adopt carbon capture and storage when producing steel (or electricity, or anything else with fossil fuels). We will need to work with other regions to bring pressure to bear. But we have no other choice. For we have no chance of success against this grave global threat if we continue to delude ourselves with twisted, self-serving logic that by increasing the causes of global destruction we somehow prevent global destruction.

To avoid this delusion, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority and other regulators must ensure that assessment of fossil fuel infrastructure proposals includes consideration of climate change impacts. In this regard, the current EIA for the Fraser Surrey Docks coal terminal is utterly inadequate.

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