

Gail Small

Northern Cheyenne

Southeastern Montana

I live on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Lame Deer, Montana. We've been fighting the coal companies for years. The land that I live on today with my four kids is my mother's family's land. And her family, they're buried right behind us in the hills. The Cheyenne themselves are about 8,000 tribal members and we live on about 500,000 acres of land here in Southeastern Montana. There's a tremendous spiritual connection to our homeland.

All my life, my people have been fighting to keep coal strip mining off our reservation. Right now, our tribal lands are surrounded by Montana's largest coal-fired power plant and five massive strip mines—the largest coal-fired generating complex in the country. The coal companies, and the oil and gas companies, just want us out of the way. The plan now is to surround our reservation with 75,000 methane gas wells. These wells would drain our ground water and turn our homeland into a desert. The average income here is only around \$10,000. The people here could all be millionaires if they would sign on the dotted line and go into a major energy contract. But they've voted and they've chosen to say no. For 30-some years, they voted and said no. Recently the U.S. Bureau of Land Management started approving coal bed methane leases right on the borders of our reservation, without even consulting our tribe. We will sue, we will organize, we will do whatever we can to stop what they call "development." In every way imaginable, coal is poison, coal is deadly.

Xin Hao (pronounced Sheen How)
Qiantang River Waterkeeper [pronounced kwin-tang]
Hangzhou, China [pronounced han-joe]

The U.S. coal companies all say that they should be allowed to export coal to China because China needs the coal. Well, I am Chinese, and I don't need or want more coal in my country. I am the Qiantang River Waterkeeper, in the beautiful city of Hangzhou, just inland from the port city of Shanghai. I work with other Waterkeepers around the world.

We in China have serious problems with pollution. The Qiantang River is polluted by ships that dump waste into the river. Chemicals and waste from large animal feeding operations also pollute the river. But coal pollution is perhaps the worst environmental problem in China. Health officials here estimate that every year, pollution from burning coal leads to 400,000 premature deaths. The sulfur in coal creates sulfuric acid, which creates acid rain, and it poisons lakes, rivers, forests, and crops.

Every week to 10 days a new coal-fired power plant opens here, which poisons the Qiantang River and the air in Hangzhou. To the United States, I say: "China should not become the dumping ground for your coal industry. Our people need clean air, not dirty U.S. coal."

Andrea Rogers

Mayor

City of Mosier, Oregon [pronounced MO-zhur]

I'm the mayor of a small town of about 450 people in Wasco County, on the Columbia River in Oregon. The Columbia River Gorge is one of the most beautiful places in the world. I live here, so I may be a bit biased, but really, you have to see it to believe it. I was stunned when I heard the proposal to bring mile-long trains of uncovered cars filled with coal along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks that run right through our little town. Other proposals call for huge barges filled with coal to float down the Columbia River. Well, we're not going to put up with this without a fight.

It's the coal dust we're concerned about. Mosier has a waterfront park; we have windsurfing; and we have cherry orchards, which is still Mosier's largest industry. We depend on the tourists who come here for the natural beauty, and to bike and hike.

Look, the railroad runs right through the town. Every business and every household would be affected. The historic Mosier Fruit Growers building, where cherries are packed every summer for export, is located less than 30 yards from the railroad tracks. Some of the Mosier Valley's orchards border the railroad tracks. Most importantly, Mosier Community School children play in the schoolyard located less than 100 yards from the railroad tracks.

Because our homes and our school are so exposed to the railroad tracks, the Mosier City Council is gravely concerned about the impact of coal dust on the health of our community members, especially our children. And because coal dust escaping from the open train cars could pollute our air, our river, and our orchards, we are concerned that coal train traffic will damage our economic bases of agriculture and tourism.

Gregory Boyce

**Chief Executive Officer/Chairman of the Board
Peabody Energy Company**

I'm the head of the biggest private coal company in the world. It's true that I make more than \$10 million a year, but I earn that money by serving our investors and customers. First, think of the tens of millions of people throughout the world who depend on us for the electricity created by the coal that we mine and sell. Some people talk about "dirty coal"; what's "dirty" is the fact that many people in the world have little or no access to electricity. That's what I'm trying to change—I'm finding ways to get power to the 3.6 billion people around the world who have no easy access to power. This is a human crisis that Peabody Coal is solving.

We began in Illinois, more than 125 years ago, but today we operate all over the world. We have big new projects in Mongolia and China, where governments are making heroic efforts to lift their people out of poverty. China itself uses more than half of all the coal in the world and it now uses twice as much as it used just 10 years ago. That's where Peabody comes in. The United States is the Saudi Arabia of coal. And the biggest coal mines in the United States are in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana. In fact, we own the biggest coal mine in the world: North Antelope Rochelle in Wyoming, which produces 100 million tons a year. Think of that. 100 million tons. Our task now is to transport much of that coal from Powder River to China. That means taking it by train to ships in Oregon and Washington, which will take it to China.

I'm the first coal executive in the United States to predict that China would need to import coal from the United States someday. I went to China. I made friends with Chinese government officials and executives at Huaneng Power. Electricity is a human right. Coal is the cheapest most reliable way to get electricity. If our friends in China want to buy coal from us, we have a moral duty to provide it. I oppose anyone who stands in the way of lifting people out of poverty through coal.

Liu Guoyue

**President, Huaneng International Co.
China**

I am an engineer trained at North China Electric Power University in thermodynamic engineering. I don't mean to brag, but I know just about everything there is to know about power plants. And now, I am president of one of the most important power companies in China. We own power plants in 18 provinces of China and one in Singapore. This is a time of change in China. Like the United States, China has a lot of coal. However, because of my country's huge growth rate—and our reliance on burning coal to produce electricity—in 2007, China went from being a net exporter of coal to a net importer. China now uses more coal every year than the United States, the European Union, and Japan—combined. As president of Huaneng, I need to figure out where all that coal is going to come from.

Lucky for us, several years ago, I met Greg Boyce, the head of Peabody Energy Company in the United States. Peabody runs the largest coal mines in the world in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. In the future, I'm hoping that this is where more and more of our coal will come from. Huaneng has been investing in port facilities, more storage for coal, and ways to transfer coal from ship to railroad. We'll be ready to buy as much coal from Peabody and others in the United States as soon as they're ready to ship it from ports in Oregon and Washington.

Monowara Uddin

Dhaka, Bangladesh

I've never seen a piece of coal in my life. I've never seen a coal-fired power plant. I've never seen railroad cars filled with coal. I've never been to a coal mine.

But I know what coal has done to my family and to others here in Bangladesh. Burning coal is one of the biggest causes of carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas that leads to climate change and to terrible conditions in my home country of Bangladesh.

Ten years ago, I lived on Bhola Island, where the Padma River empties into the Bay of Bengal. Bhola was beautiful, and calm and peaceful. We had ducks, chickens, and goats. But with climate changes, the Padma River goes crazy because of increased glacier melt and the heavier monsoon rains. And every year, our island was hit by worse storms and rising sea levels. My family didn't want to, but we had to leave and come to the capital city, Dhaka. In 1990, there were 6 million people in Dhaka; now there are 16 million!

My husband and I, along with our four children, live in a 3 x 3-meter corrugated iron box. It is hot beyond belief in the summer, and the mosquitoes and rats are everywhere. We have one toilet here for 60 people, and one water tap. Someone is always sick. Only money matters here. It is very sad. Compared to Dhaka, life was easy in Bhola. Now we have to work very hard just to eat.

So I may never have seen any coal, but because of climate change, I am a victim of coal. The lives of people in my family will never be the same.

Matthew K. Rose
President and Chief Executive Officer
Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway (BNSF)

Call me Matt. I live in Texas with my wife and two kids. I've been with Burlington Northern since 1993, and have helped it grow.

A lot of people don't realize the close connection between coal and railroads. More than 25 percent of BNSF revenue comes from hauling coal. Almost half the tonnage carried by our rail cars is coal. And we see coal as a huge growth industry. With Union Pacific Railroad, we own what's called the 103-mile-long "Joint Line" in the Powder River Basin area of Wyoming. This is the rail line that carries most Powder River Basin coal to the rest of the United States. It is the busiest stretch of railroad in the world. The Joint Line handles more than 60 loaded coal trains *a day*. And each train is more than a mile long — 100 to 125 cars.

If we could get ports in the Pacific Northwest to handle coal exports to Asia, we would be in a position to vastly increase our profits. This may be the reason that one of the richest men in the world, Warren Buffett, paid \$34 billion to acquire 77 percent of BNSF— Buffett's biggest acquisition ever. This is our hope: Wyoming and Montana coal from the Powder River Basin will travel to Asia to power economic growth and prosperity. To lift people out of poverty. And BNSF will be the railroad to get coal from here to there. Good times are ahead. For everyone.

Ayelet Waldman (pronounced eye-YELL-it)

Writer

Berkeley, California

When my daughter Sophie was 4 years old, she was a mother's dream. Her favorite lunch wasn't pizza or hamburgers or chicken McNuggets. My little girl loved nothing better than a tuna sandwich with plenty of celery and pickles.

Not everything, however, was going smoothly. Our daughter, a bright, inquisitive child, had begun to exhibit some peculiar problems. By the age of 3, Sophie could tie her shoes; at 4 she had somehow forgotten that skill. For a while she had been making excellent progress in learning how to read. But then she seemed to slow down, even to go backwards.

Because we lived in an old house, we worried about lead poisoning. So we had Sophie's blood tested and discovered that she suffered from high levels of mercury—from eating so much tuna fish. I learned that 40 percent of all human mercury exposure comes from eating tuna fish. And 95 to 100 percent of human mercury exposure comes from eating seafood. When researchers recently tested 500 fish in U.S. lakes and reservoirs, they found mercury in every single fish, and almost half of the fish had so much mercury that they weren't safe to eat.

Mercury poisoning can cause everything from nerve damage to hearing loss to insomnia. But fetuses are most at risk. Children born with mercury in their system have trouble with coordination, concentration, language, and memory—and continue to have the same problems many years later.

And where does all this mercury in the oceans, lakes, and rivers come from? From coal-fired power plants. Mercury gets turned into vapor when coal is burned and ends up in the water. Why are we spewing this stuff into the atmosphere? This mercury problem is about coal, pure and simple. You wouldn't go and break your child's bones one by one, but we tolerate this kind of poison that's ruining their minds. It's insane. And now they want to export even more coal to China so that even more mercury will poison our children. Not if I can help it.

Shi Zhengrong (“Mr. Sunshine”)

Chief Executive and Founder

Suntech Power Holdings

Wuxi, China

I went to school in Australia and earned a doctorate in solar power technology. My company is one of the largest producers of photovoltaic solar cells in the world and I am one of the wealthiest men in China. (Some in the media have nicknamed me “Mr. Sunshine.”)

The Chinese government has offered us a great deal of assistance: free land, research and development, low interest loans. I know that many people in the United States think that China uses too much coal, is a very polluted place—and it is. But China is also a leading producer of clean energy. We produce about half of all the world’s photovoltaic solar cells.

Still, burning coal is what generates the most electricity in China. And coal is a very dirty form of energy. Solar power produces only 1/10th of 1 percent of all the energy in China. I might not say this in public, but obviously if the United States approves coal exports to China from Oregon and Washington, China will have access to unlimited quantities of cheap coal from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. This would continue to make coal-produced energy cheaper than it would be without this supply of coal. And the cheaper coal is, the slower it will take China—and the world—to convert to clean energy: especially solar and wind. That’s why to help make China cleaner and greener, we need to cut China’s dependence on cheap coal. The less coal available to China, the quicker it will make the transition to solar.

Dave Treick [pronounced Trike]
Retired High School Principal
Oregon and Wyoming

I grew up in Wyoming. After I graduated from college, I moved with my wife to Newport, Oregon. I got a job teaching science at Newport High School on the Oregon coast. But all the budget cuts made life there too stressful, so we moved our family back to Wyoming.

Toward the end of my career, I returned to Oregon as a high school principal in Bend. After a few years, I moved back to Wyoming to finish up. It seems my entire career has been in search of stable school funding. At Cody High School in Wyoming, I had “money to burn,” from fossil fuel revenues, including coal. Every student had a laptop. We built a new auditorium. We had fully equipped science labs. It was great. When we adopted new math textbooks, I had the old ones boxed and shipped to my former school in Oregon; they were better than anything they had.

Now I’m retired. I spend my time in Yellowstone and get out to the Pacific coast whenever I can. I hate to admit it, but I know the earth is changing because of coal. Burning coal produces more carbon dioxide per amount of energy produced than any other fuel. Because of climate change, the places I love are in danger. Like much of the west, Yellowstone’s winters aren’t as cold. The beetles now can survive at higher altitudes and are killing the white pine forests, one of the grizzly bear’s main food sources. And now there are more forest fires. The whole ecosystem has been disrupted. And the coast is in danger of rising seas and acidification. But coal paid my salary when Oregon couldn’t; it funds my pension, it educates kids in my community. So when I hear the term “coal exports” . . . well, I know that it’s complicated.

Harry Smiskin

Yakama Tribal Council Chairman

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Toppenish, Washington

The Yakama Nation is recognized by the U.S. government as a sovereign Indian tribe. I am chair of our tribal council. We have rights that we reserved in the Treaty of 1855, which we signed with the U.S. government. Treaties are the highest law of the land. And this treaty secures for the Yakama people the right to fish “in all usual and accustomed places,” including the Columbia River. This includes the right to live free from environmental damages caused by anything coming from outside the boundaries of our reservation—including the transportation of coal through our ancestral lands.

Our treaty rights are not just for our people today; we hold the environment in trust for the benefit of generations to come. For more than 150 years, outsiders have ravaged the Yakama People’s ancestral lands, water, and air. We have been told that this destruction is *progress*. But this so-called progress has nearly wiped out our indigenous culture. And the next wave of “progress” that threatens our land and people aims to turn the entire northwestern United States into a hub to export coal around the world.

This could mean bringing roughly 150 million tons of coal through our land every year—by rail and barge. The barges will cut the nets used by Yakama tribal fishers. And the barges threaten the safety of Yakama fishers exercising their treaty-reserved fishing rights. More coal trains also threaten Yakama people’s safety and health. The railroad companies admit that coal dust will escape, and coal dust is a proven health hazard. Inevitably, coal will spill into the Columbia Basin, where it will threaten our tribal fisheries. Not only does this coal threaten our water, the salmon, and our people, when this coal is burned in Asia, our people will suffer even more from increased air pollution and global warming.

The Yakama People say NO to coal.

Stuart Arnold

Tuna Fisherman/Boat Captain

Astoria, Oregon

I've been fishing for tuna in the Pacific Ocean for more than 25 years—since I was 8 years old, to be exact. My family has owned our boat, the F/V Lihue II, since 1975. It's a gorgeous boat, built in Hawaii out of fir wood in 1939. I'm the boat's captain.

My dad, Richard Arnold, was a great fisherman and he taught me to fish. I don't mean to brag, but there is pretty much nobody who knows these waters like I do. I've fished here off the Oregon coast, as well as in Alaska, catching albacore tuna, black cod, and crab.

These days, we sell our tuna to people who are going to can it themselves. On a good day, we'll catch as many as 45 or more fish, maybe 16 pounds each. We'll sell them off the dock for \$2 or \$3 a pound, so that's not a bad day's work. We put them on ice, but we never freeze them. Of course, I keep some, too, because my kids love albacore tuna.

But here's the part that makes me angry. Because of all the coal-fired power plants, the albacore tuna that I catch have some of the highest mercury content of any fish, anywhere. The mercury is a deadly poison, and people shouldn't consume it at all, especially women of childbearing age or children. So my business is at risk. Because of all this coal burning, the fish that my family has caught for decades—and that my own kids eat—has become more and more poisonous. This is so unfair. Nobody asked me if they could burn all this coal. Who is going to pay me when people stop buying my tuna?

R. Narasimha Murthy
Manager, Sowmya Industries
Nellore, India

My brother and I began Sowmya Industries eight years ago. Our company makes “shutters”—strong pieces of metal that hold wet concrete in place while it solidifies into columns and beams. Our business could be booming, but we lack one key ingredient: electricity. In India, over half our electricity, about 55 percent, comes from power plants that burn coal. Much of our coal comes from Indonesia, but Indonesia recently doubled its prices. We have lots of coal in India, but for whatever reason, our government-owned coal company cannot figure out how to produce enough of it. As a result, companies all over our state of Andhra Pradesh have frequent blackouts. Here in Nellore, we lose power for three hours every evening. We have no power all day Wednesdays and all day Saturdays. Instead of getting electricity from the grid, like in the United States, we have to either burn diesel fuel in generators—which costs us thousands of dollars extra—or we just send our workers home.

This is very frustrating. Power is a basic need. Everything depends on electrical power. Obviously, if a steady supply of cheap coal were available from the United States, this could solve our electricity problems. We have enough power plants, just not enough coal to burn in the plants. And don't think that this affects only our shutter industry. Every business in this part of India suffers because of this, and every worker in each business suffers, too.

Dan Coffman

**President, International Longshore and Warehouse Local #21
Longview, Washington**

The ILWU's slogan is "An injury to one is an injury to all." My union is the product of the struggles and sacrifices of workers all up and down the Pacific coast, beginning especially in the coastwide 1934 longshore strike, which led to employers finally recognizing our union. I say all this to point out that my union only takes positions that are good for working people—all working people. And the fact of the matter is that these coal export terminals in the Northwest, and especially the one proposed here in Longview and across the river in St. Helens, Oregon, will create permanent family-wage jobs. We desperately need these jobs; the official unemployment rate in Oregon and Washington is between 8 and 9 percent. People are suffering. Yes, I've heard the complaints about all the increased railroad traffic in our communities. Look, I grew up in Rainier, Oregon, near here, and I know that these towns were built to accommodate the railroad. Now, all of a sudden, some people don't like what the railroad brings? But we are always evolving. We have to change with the times.

And here's another thing. Environmentalists raise lots of objections to coal exports. And I agree that we need to consider the environment. But let's get real. There is too much money at stake. If there is a market for coal in Asia — and there is — the coal companies are going to get it there, one way or another. And if they don't send it through Oregon and Washington, the companies have said that one option is sending it through the port of Guaymas, Mexico. Ask yourself: Who will handle this coal in a more environmentally friendly way: ports in Oregon and Washington, where we have skilled, unionized workers and tons of environmental regulations, or non-union Guaymas, where regulations are weaker and often not even enforced? You know the answer.

Clint McRae

**Rancher, Owner of Rocker Six Cattle Company
Member, Northern Plains Resource Council
Forsyth, Montana**

I am a fourth-generation rancher in southeastern Montana. My great-grandfather emigrated from Scotland and settled along Rosebud Creek in the 1880s. He was attracted by the clean water—both aboveground and below.

Today, that clean Montana water has been polluted by coal. In Colstrip, about 120 miles east of Billings, four coal-fired power plants were built in the 1970s and 1980s. Along with these power plants came huge coal-ash ponds and big open pits filled with coal ash, the toxic remains from burning coal. Coal ash is full of dangerous chemicals such as arsenic, lead, selenium, chromium, and mercury. The companies and government officials promised ranchers that these “ponds” would be “completely sealed,” but instead they’ve leaked poison into shallow aquifers used by our families and our animals for drinking water.

Recently, a landowner checking a reservoir saw a deer refusing to drink after she waded into the water. Turns out the reservoir was filling up with poisonous water from the coal-ash ponds.

The coal companies and the government agencies in their pocket, say, “Trust us.” Arch Coal wants to build another big coal mine at Otter Creek to extract 40 million tons a year to export to Asia. The plan is to send the coal by train to ports in the Northwest. They want to send 15 to 20 trains a day right through my ranch—cut my ranch in half. I am expected to sacrifice our operation so a for-profit company can take my land to haul coal to China? I’ll fight that tooth and nail.

Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky

**Community Organizer
Columbia Riverkeeper
Hood River, Oregon**

I grew up in Oregon. I love living here. But I don't love how corporations have been destroying the environment. My first "official" environmental activism here was doing direct action to defend the forests from logging. A few years ago, I moved to Portland where I began working with Rising Tide, a group that had started doing community education about the threat posed by the proposed coal exports from the Northwest. And now I'm continuing that work as a community organizer with Columbia Riverkeeper, whose mission is to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it.

My job is to organize grassroots opposition to the plans to turn the Pacific Northwest into a launching pad to export coal to Asia. The coal export proposals are crazy. Not only would coal exports threaten the Columbia River, but also they would threaten all life on earth. First, burning coal produces more greenhouse gases per energy produced than any other fuel. As a result of global climate change, the oceans are rising, species face extinction, glaciers are melting, people around the world—especially poor people—are losing their lands, oceans are acidifying, and the future of life on earth is put at risk. Given all this, for companies to try to increase the burning of coal for energy is an unimaginable crime and must be stopped.

Besides that, coal poisons anything it touches. Look at what coal has done to Appalachia. It's made a few individuals very rich, but it made most people poor and destroyed the land. Coal companies care about one thing: profits. They have no more respect for workers or for communities than they have for the mountains they chop down and dump in streams. And the coal companies try to buy politicians and the media. They poison the truth as much as they poison the air and water. What gives me hope, however, is seeing the creativity and dedication of ordinary people who are resisting coal exports, who become more active the more they learn. I know we'll win.

Marianne Adlington

Cattle Rancher

Barham, New South Wales, Australia (Southeast Australia)

My world has dried up. Global warming. Climate change. Whatever you call it, it's destroyed my way of life. My husband, Malcolm, and I used to have 500 dairy cattle. Now we have only 70 left. We have nothing to feed them. Because of the worst drought in Australia's history, we are living in a desert. And we can't afford to buy grain, so slowly our cattle are starving. I can't stand lying in bed every night and hearing the cattle bellow from hunger.

Malcolm and I are 52 years old, and for 36 years—since we were just 16 years old—we've been in the dairy business. It's all we know. Malcolm told me the other night, "I have absolutely nothing to go on for." He was crying. Farmers around here have moved away. Some have even committed suicide. And, frankly, I'm worried about Malcolm.

Nature didn't cause the climate to change. People did—spewing too much carbon dioxide (a "greenhouse gas") into the atmosphere. Of all the fuels, coal damages the climate the most, and Australia continues to burn coal and even export it to Asia. One Australian company, Ambre Energy, even wants to dig up more U.S. coal in a place called the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana, and export it to Asia—which will make the climate even hotter and drier. These people are murderers, plain and simple. Why not just hand my husband a shotgun and tell him to go blow his head off?

Fortunately, groups in Australia like Quit Coal are trying to put a stop to burning coal for energy—and to ban coal exports. It may be too late to help my husband and me, but it's time to stop the coal criminals.

Lowell Chandler
Blue Skies Campaign
Missoula, Montana

There are lots of reasons to be against coal exports from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana, but my reasons are personal. I live about 200 yards from the Missoula rail yard. It feels like the coal trains come right through my living room every night. The coal trains are more than a mile long and each one of them has four diesel engines. The coal dust would be bad enough, but it's the diesel fumes that get to me. Take a look at these diesel engines. The smoke is pitch black. The diesel fumes are so thick in my house that I can literally taste diesel.

The diesel gunk cakes on my windows; it covers my patio furniture. If I lean on the window sill, sit outside, or put my hands on a table on the patio, I end up with black soot all over me. It's oily, disgusting, and it cakes up. As I say, it's become very personal.

I began asking, "What's in this stuff?" It turns out that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that diesel fumes have about 40 toxic compounds, including arsenic, benzene, and formaldehyde, known cancer-causing agents. The Clean Air Task Force (CATF) found that diesel fumes cause heart attacks, asthma attacks, and bronchitis. The CATF also found that diesel fumes hurt your immune system, and put people at greater risk of viruses and bacteria.

And if all these poisons weren't bad enough, the trains are incredibly loud—they've been measured at 119 decibels, about what a jet engine sounds like. Even 105 decibels is dangerous, so imagine being exposed regularly to 119 decibels. A friend of mine was in the military in Iraq during the war. He has PTSD—post-traumatic stress disorder—and he wakes up in the middle of the night thinking that bombs are going off. He doesn't need this. No one does.

All this helps explain why I joined the Blue Skies Campaign, an organization devoted to stop coal exports and the harm caused by coal trains. Recently, I participated in non-violent civil disobedience to try to stop Montana from leasing even more public land to coal companies. I am willing to risk arrest to stop coal exports to Asia—and to stop the coal trains that are killing people.