

I feel that the current coal mining lease procedures are not in the best interest of the American public. The coal companies are not paying the true cost of the coal that they are taking out of the ground and selling at a much higher price in Asia.

Here is just one example.

The problem stems from the burning of this coal in Asia. As coal is burned, CO₂ is released. CO₂ is a gas that disperses all over the globe. As it circulates around, it combines with water or water vapor to create a mild acid. Slowly but inexorably our oceans are becoming more acidic as a result.

Ocean acidification is a huge problem for the economy of our state. It affects one of our major industries, one that earns an estimated \$270 million a year for the state coffers every year, the shellfish industry. Acidic water affects oysters and, even more important, shell-forming marine plankton which is critical in basic marine food chains. These effects start in the higher latitudes and gradually move toward the equator. The burning of coal in Asia will affect ocean acidification all over the world, especially having an impact on ecosystems such as coral reefs, an important support system for fish stocks.

Some of Washington's oyster farmers have already had to close their operations in this state and move to the less acidic waters of Hawaii. This is just one example of how selling this coal to Asia at bargain basement prices is counter to the best economic interest of Washington and may affect the ability of the ocean to produce food used around the world. Further acidification will cost us our shellfish industry with its hundreds of jobs. Its overall effects will be significant and adverse and cannot be mitigated here or anywhere around the world.

I feel you should close down this method of selling one of our precious natural resources abroad. You don't have to be a Trump supporter to want to get a better deal for America. The best deal for this country would be to discontinue selling coal abroad.

*Diane Gordon
6421 Street
Washougal, WA 98671
hdgordens@comcast.net
(360) 235-7740*