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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONSERVATION GROUPS MOVE TO DEFEND OREGON'S DENIAL OF COAL TERMINAL ON COLUMBIA RIVER

Groups intervene against attempts by Ambre Energy to force coal exports through Oregon

Oct. 9, 2014 (Portland, OR) – Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Columbia Riverkeeper and the Sierra Club have intervened to defend Oregon's denial of a key permit for the proposed Morrow Pacific coal export facility on the Columbia River in Boardman, Oregon. The intervention responds to appeals filed on September 8th by Australian-based Ambre Energy, the Port of Morrow, and the State of Wyoming in an effort to force Oregon into exporting coal by overturning the Oregon Department of State Lands' (DSL) landmark permit denial. On October 2nd, DSL [rejected](#) Wyoming's standing to appeal. Earthjustice and the Crag Law Center will represent the conservation groups in the intervention. ([Link to petition to participate](#))

"Oregonians and Northwest residents have spoken loud and clear: We oppose shipping hazardous coal through Oregon and along the Columbia River," stated Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director for Columbia Riverkeeper. "The State of Oregon got it right when it denied Ambre Energy's coal export project. We're prepared to defend the State's decision to uphold laws that protect what we as Oregonians hold dear—clean water and fishable rivers."

The Morrow Pacific project is one of three remaining proposals that would export a combined 100 million tons of coal every year from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. The coal would be shipped by rail or barge through the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to Northwest ports and then shipped overseas to be burned.

Ambre Energy, a money-losing Australian startup whose shaky financial outlook was detailed in a 2013 report by Sightline Institute ([link](#)), is behind two proposals on the Columbia River that would ship a combined 54 million tons of coal per year.

Ambre's Morrow Pacific project proposed transporting 8.8 million tons of coal by rail to the Columbia River in Boardman, loading the coal onto barges and shipping it through the Columbia

River Gorge National Scenic Area to Port Westward, where it would be loaded on to ocean-going vessels. The project would have doubled barge traffic on the Columbia River.

“The Columbia River Gorge is a national scenic treasure and is protected by federal law,” said Michael Lang, Conservation Director for Friends of the Columbia Gorge. “Communities throughout the Gorge and up and down the Columbia River oppose turning the Gorge into Wyoming’s coal chute to Asia. We will defend Oregon’s decision to enforce laws that protect our water resources and communities.”

Ambre Energy initially submitted its application for a “removal-fill” permit in February 2012. Over the next 31 months, three public review periods passed while Ambre sought and received eight deadline extensions to provide information about the serious impacts resulting from the proposal, including destructive impacts on a treaty-protected Native American fishing site. On August 18th, DSL denied the permit, stating that the Morrow Pacific project was not consistent with the “protection, conservation and best use of the state’s water resources, and that the applicant did not provide sufficient analysis of alternatives that would avoid construction of a new dock and impacts on tribal fisheries.”([Link to DSL decision](#))

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About Columbia Riverkeeper

Columbia Riverkeeper’s mission is to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. Representing a diverse coalition of members and interests, Columbia Riverkeeper works to restore a Columbia River where people can safely eat the fish they catch, and where children can swim without fear of toxic exposure. The organization is a member of Waterkeeper Alliance, the world’s fastest growing environmental movement, uniting more than 200 Waterkeeper organizations worldwide and focusing citizen action on issues that affect our waterways, from pollution to climate change. For more information go to columbiariverkeeper.org.