CHESAPEAKE CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Exporting Coal - Exporting Climate Change

The threat of increasing coal exports from the East Coast

COAL OVERVIEW

Coal is the world's dirtiest form of energy and the greatest contributor to climate change. Since the 1880s, coal has remained the largest source of power in America. In recent years, however, U.S. coal consumption has begun to slow and even decrease. Lower natural gas prices, stricter pollution regulations, grassroots action to shut down and prevent construction of coal plants and increasing competition from clean energy sources like wind and solar power have all played a role. As a result, the coal industry has turned to a new source of profits: exporting coal to other countries.

REGIONAL COAL EXPORT FACILITIES

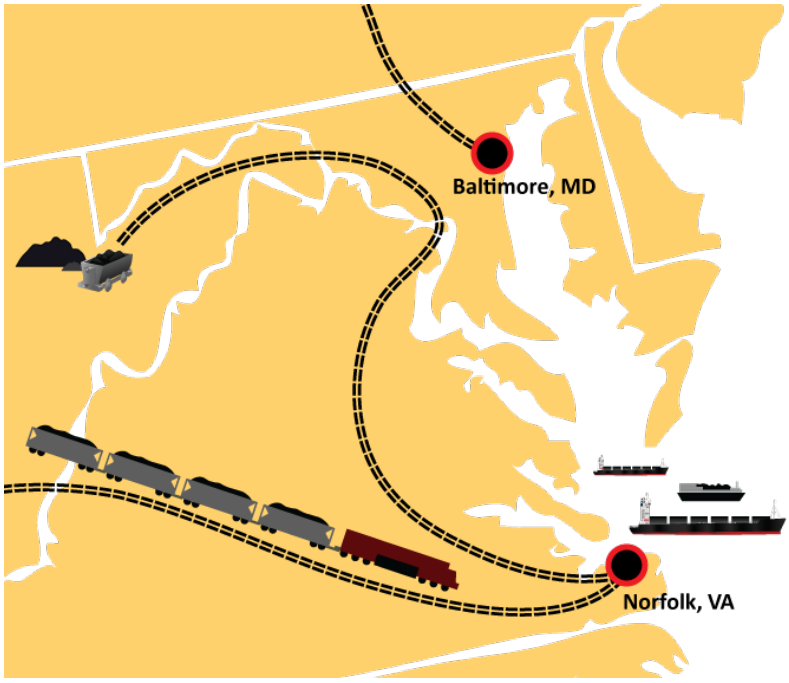
Norfolk, Virginia is the largest export facility in America, consistently processing one-third to one-half of all coal exports since 2000.[2] In 2012, Norfolk exported 48.5 million tons of coal, 39 percent of the national total.[1]

Baltimore, Maryland is currently the third biggest U.S. export terminal, closely behind New Orleans. Coal exports from both ports have grown significantly since 2009.[2] In 2012, Baltimore was responsible for exporting 19.6 million tons of coal, representing 16 percent of the U.S. total.[1]

U.S. COAL EXPORTS

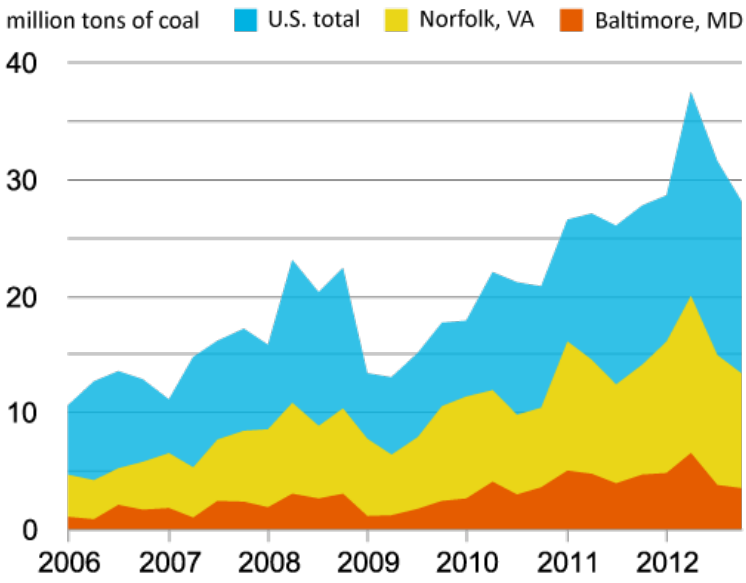
Currently, U.S. coal exports are growing at more than 20 million tons per year. In 2012, coal exports reached an all-time high of 126 million tons[1] – more than triple the amount of coal exported from the U.S. in 2002.[2]

In 2012, about 75 percent of U.S. coal exports were shipped to Europe and Asia.[1] Coal exports to Europe and Asia are primarily serviced out of the East and Gulf Coasts via the ports of Norfolk, Virginia; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Baltimore, Maryland. This is due to their proximity to U.S. coal mines, concentrated in the Appalachia region.



*Note: this map represents a portion of the rail lines servicing Norfolk and Baltimore ports. Map is not precise to exact track locations.

THE PROBLEM: Coal Export Expansion in Maryland and Virginia



Currently, there are numerous fights being waged in the Pacific Northwest to combat expansion and development of new coal export terminals. Because of successful grassroots campaigns to block export terminals on the West Coast, coal companies nationally are hedging their bets and pursuing the construction and expansion of terminals on the East and Gulf Coasts to ensure their coal can make its way to international markets.

Regionally, coal exports have grown over the past three years out of the ports of Baltimore and Norfolk. In fact, exports reached an all-time high in 2012, with output nearly doubling out of both ports.[1] With this new surge of east coast exports moving forward, CCAN is committed to holding the coal industry accountable to environmental laws meant to protect public health, the environment and the climate.

Climate Change, Environmental and Health Impacts from Coal Exports

From mine to train to port, coal exports impact communities at every stage of the process.

- **Train pollution**: More coal trains exporting more coal means more air quality impacts from diesel locomotives.
  - → Coal trains are typically a mile and a half in length, consisting of 125 to 150 individual cars.[3] Each loaded coal car weighs an average of 143 tons.[4] Together, the train requires four to five locomotives to carry the weight.
  - → This means one coal train emits at least four times more pollution than a normal single-locomotive train.
  - → Diesel exhaust from coal trains can cause serious long-term health problems like cancer, cardiovascular problems, aggravated asthma, chronic bronchitis and premature death.

- **Coal dust**: Coal train cars are typically uncovered, causing coal dust to escape from rail cars during transport. The export facilities are also legally permitted to pollute their surrounding communities with coal dust.

- → The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has linked coal dust to a number of respiratory health problems such as chronic bronchitis, decreased pulmonary function, and emphysema.[5]
- → Coal dust also contains toxic chemicals such as arsenic that are known to cause cancer, birth defects, reproductive disorders, neurological damage, learning disabilities, kidney disease and diabetes.[6]
- → In Norfolk, coal contamination has been found in soil samples as far as 12 kilometers away from the Lamberts Point coal terminal. Coal dust on windowsills, cars, and plants nearby is a common sight.
- → Studies estimate a loss of 500 pounds to a ton worth of coal dust from a single loaded coal car.[7] This equals one pound of dust escaping into the air for each mile a single coal car travels between the mine and port. In many areas, black coal dust can be observed along the railroad right of way, in between the tracks, and on nearby homes, porches, and cars.

- **Train traffic**: Increasing coal exports would put more strains on rail-lines, which could damage tracks, cause delays throughout the entire rail system, and increase the risk of accidents.
  - → Many rail systems in America are already nearing capacity.[8]
  - → Many communities along coal rail-lines are cut in half once one of these mile-and-a-half long trains roars through town.
  - → This makes it difficult for people to access schools, hospitals and other facilities on the other side of the railroad tracks.
  - → Dust buildup on the tracks also prevents water from draining from track beds, which in turn can push steel rails out of gauge and cause derailments.[9]

- **Coal mining**: The expansion of coal exports could ultimately lead to an unnecessary increase in coal mining.
  - → The dangerous consequences of coal mining include the destruction of natural habitats, contamination of groundwater, coal fires, acid rain, and related health impacts like increases in respiratory diseases and cancer.

- **Runaway climate change**: Coal pollution will make climate change worse, regardless of where the coal is used.
  - → To stay below 2 degrees Celsius of global warming – the internationally recognized goal to avoid catastrophic impacts – the fossil fuel industry must not burn approximately 80 percent of their known reserves of coal, oil and gas, according to data compiled by the Carbon Tracker Initiative.[10]
  - → The U.S. has the largest proven reserves of coal in the world.[11] It's in the interest of all countries to keep this fuel in the ground and keep its pollution out of our atmosphere.

JOIN OUR FIGHT AGAINST EAST COAST EXPORTS TODAY!

Get involved and learn more at

www.chesapeakeclimate.org/coalexport

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