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FM3

*Public Opinion Research
& Strategy*

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz and Curtis Below
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RE: Washington and Oregon Voters' Attitudes Toward Coal Shipping and Export

DATE: September 16, 2013

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed two parallel surveys of 600 voters in Washington and Oregon likely to vote in the November 2014 election.¹ Overall, the survey found that a majority of voters in both Washington and Oregon oppose proposals to ship coal along rail lines through their home states for the purposes of export to Asia. Majorities of moderate, independent and liberal voters in both states expressed opposition. Additionally, opposition has grown in both states by double digits since the summer of 2012.

Among the key specific findings of the survey were the following:

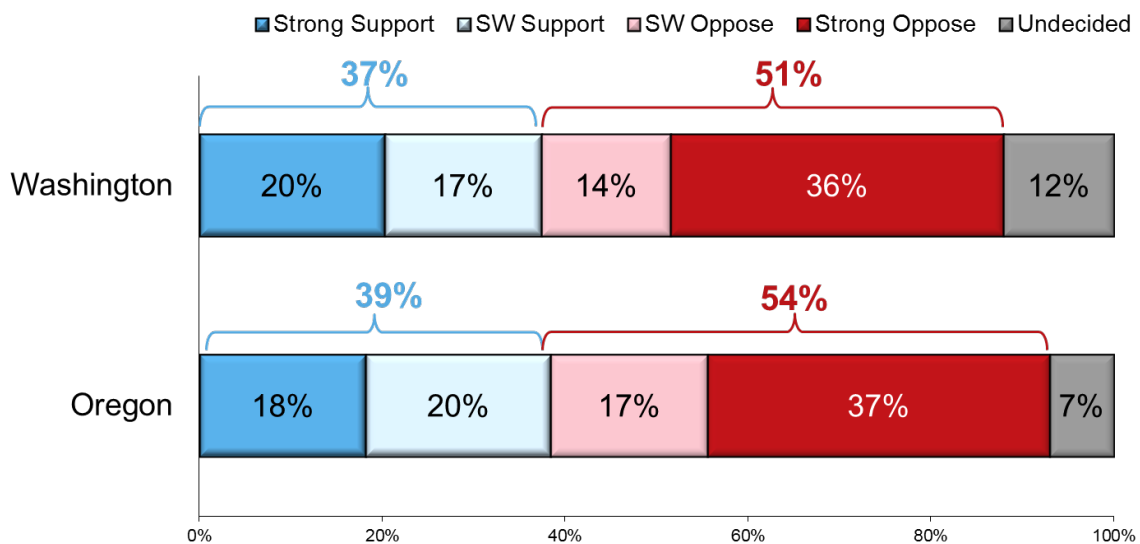
- **Majorities of voters in each Washington and Oregon oppose transporting coal through their home states for export to Asia.** Majorities of voters in Washington (51%) and Oregon (54%) expressed opposition to shipping coal in rail cars through their states, after hearing a brief description of the proposal (**Figure 1** on the following page). Additionally, there was far greater intensity expressed by opponents of the coal export proposal than by supporters. For example, in Washington 36 percent indicated they “strongly opposed” the proposal, compared to 20 percent who “strongly support” it. These sentiments were echoed by Oregon voters – 37 percent “strongly opposed” it compared to 18 percent who were “strongly supportive.”

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FIGURE 1
Voters' Positions on Shipping and Exporting Coal through Washington and Oregon

<p><u>Washington</u> <i>Coal companies propose to ship millions of tons of coal per year through Washington along the Columbia River and through Puget Sound on trains and tankers to Asia, where the coal would be burned in coal-fired power plants. The coal trains would have uncovered rail cars. Would you support or oppose transporting coal through Washington to export to Asia?</i></p>	<p><u>Oregon</u> <i>Coal companies propose to ship millions of tons of coal per year through Oregon and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area on trains, barges, and tankers to Asia, where the coal would be burned in coal-fired power plants. The coal trains would have uncovered rail cars. Would you support or oppose transporting coal through Oregon to export to Asia?</i></p>
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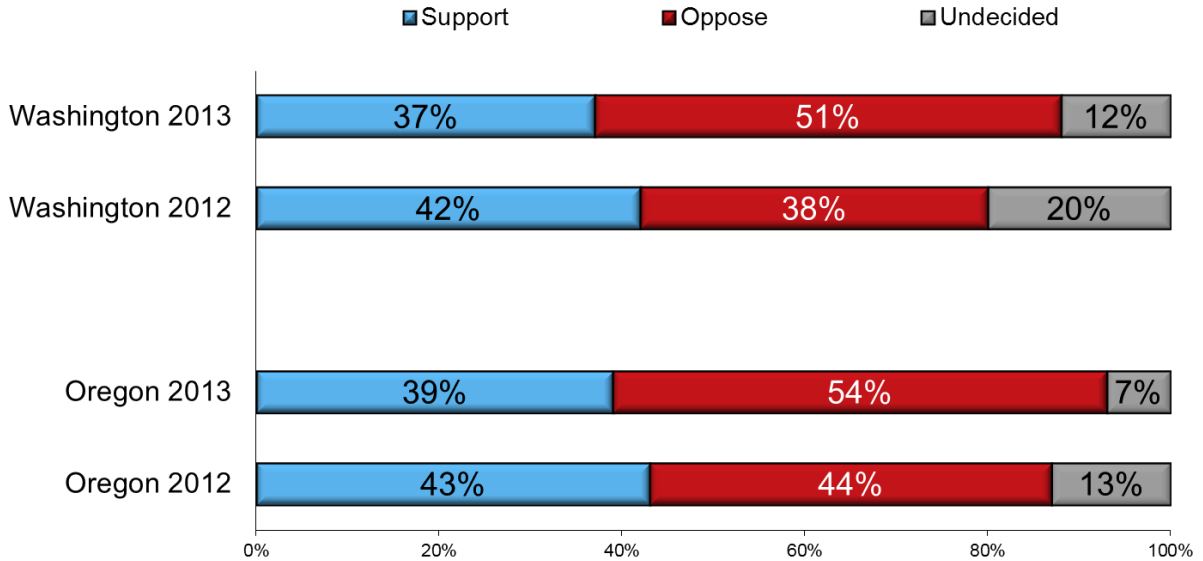


- In both states, opposition to coal export cut across many segments of the electorate.** While a large majority of self-identified liberal voters (69% in Washington and 75% in Oregon) expressed opposition to the proposal, majorities of other key electoral subgroups are also opposed:

 - ✓ Most self-identified moderates in both Washington (54%) and Oregon (54%) expressed opposition.
 - ✓ Politically independent voters also expressed reservations. In Washington, 48 percent of self-identified independents expressed opposition (40 percent expressed support), including 58 percent of independent women. In Oregon, a majority (51%) of registered independents expressed opposition, including 61 percent of independent women.

- ✓ Opposition cuts across the age spectrum. In both states, majorities of voters under and over 50 years of age oppose the proposal.
- ✓ Majorities of voters from union households oppose shipping coal through Washington (51%) and through Oregon (52%).
- **Opposition to the coal shipping and exporting proposal has grown in both Washington and Oregon over the past year.** In the summer of 2012, voters in both states appeared far more divided on whether they supported or opposed shipping and exporting coal through their home states (**Figure 2**). However, after hearing updated descriptions of the proposalⁱⁱ this past August, opposition has increased by double digits in both Washington (+13%) and Oregon (+10%).

FIGURE 2
Changes in Voters' Perspectives on Shipping and Exporting Coal in the Past Year



Taken together, these survey results suggest that voters in Washington and Oregon are shifting their opinions towards proposals to ship coal on rail lines through their home states for the purpose of export to Asia. Majorities of voters in both states now oppose such proposals, with opposition now also coming from the ideological center of the electorate in both states.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From August 22-29, 2013, FM3 completed 600 telephone interviews (on landlines and cell phones) with voters in each Washington and Oregon (i.e., 600 interviews in each state) who are likely to vote in the November 2014 election. The margin of sampling error is +/-4.0% per state at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within each sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.

ⁱⁱ Washington July 2012 Question Wording: “A number of Washington communities with shipping ports are considering proposals to build major terminals for the purpose of exporting coal. Coal would be mined in Montana or Wyoming, carried through Washington in train cars, and taken to Washington ports where it would be shipped to China for use in coal-burning power plants. Would you support or oppose building these coal export terminals in Washington?”

Oregon August 2012 Question Wording: “A number of Oregon communities with shipping ports are considering proposals to build major terminals for the purpose of exporting coal. Coal would be mined in Montana or Wyoming, carried through Oregon in train cars and Columbia River barges to Oregon ports where it would be shipped to Asia for use in coal-burning power plants. Would you support or oppose building these coal export terminals in Oregon?”