

January 21, 2013

GPT/Custer Spur EIS c/o CH2M HILL
1100 112th Avenue NE Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004



The Community Food Co-op is a consumer-owned natural food grocery retailer that has been a reliable source of quality products and honest information in Whatcom County since 1970. The Co-op has two locations, a 15,000 square-foot store in downtown Bellingham and a 17,000 square-foot store in the Cordata neighborhood. We are recognized for our commitment to building community and supporting a vibrant local economy.

The Co-op is the tenth largest cooperatively owned grocery retailer in the US. In 2012 our stores will have sales in excess of \$29 million from over one million transactions. The Co-op is a major employer with an annual payroll of \$4.8 million and over 200 local residents on staff.

A significant percentage of Whatcom County households are Co-op members. Our active membership numbers over 18,000 households, 15,000 of which are in Whatcom County. Co-op members live and work throughout Whatcom County; approximately 2,500 of our active Whatcom County members live outside Bellingham.

As a business that is committed to continued success and to the well-being of the community we serve, we are writing to request that you include in the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal a study of the effect on the recreation sites of Boulevard Park and Alaska Ferry Terminal and other parks throughout Whatcom County. In particular, please consider:

- Accessibility for people attending events at these destinations
- Noise disruption during the event due to increase train traffic
- Community loss of these public venues for events, due to access, noise, safety and the impacts upon a sense of place and community heritage
- Increased safety concerns because of train traffic, train derailment (actual and perceived)
- Access of first responders to any emergencies at the events. We have had emergencies at past events and this is a significant concern to mitigate

We have our annual summer party Boulevard Park bringing together over 1,000 people in the community. Our annual meeting takes place at the Alaska Ferry Terminal building. Over 650 people attend this meeting where they vote for annual board members and learn about critical happenings of the Co-op over the past year. Both events provide deep contact with owners and potential owners of the Co-op. We have significant events throughout the year in parks and recreation areas that would also be impacted. We ask that other parks throughout Whatcom County also be included in the study.

The Co-op's ability to hold safe, healthy, accessible events in outdoor venues that encourage enjoyment of our spectacular natural surroundings is fundamental to our identity. Disruption to these events due to impacts from any or all of the factors listed above would have an adverse impact on our business and damage our brand image.

We request an analysis of economic, social, health and environmental costs—direct, indirect and cumulative—associated with the impact on recreation areas in Bellingham and Whatcom County. This analysis should be done in context of the current and likely future traffic.

We are requesting that you mitigate the risk posed to recreation areas by not allowing any development or activity at the site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Megan Westgate, Board Chair

On behalf of Community Food Co-op Board of Directors:

Brooks Dimmick

Rosalinda Guillen

Steven Harper

Brent Harrison

Beau Hilty-Jones

Mariah Ross

Jim Ashby, Community Food Co-op General Manager