

January 21, 2013

GPT/Custer Spur EIS  
c/o CH2M Hill  
1100 112<sup>th</sup> 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 diminished road access to core Bellingham business districts. In particular, please consider impact of increased rail traffic on:

- Actual or perceived reduced ability for shoppers to easily and quickly get to our stores
- Actual or perceived reduced ability for suppliers and vendors to easily and quickly get to our stores
- Desirability of Bellingham as a destination commerce center
- Projected growth rates for the city, county and immediate region

The Co-op depends on shoppers and suppliers being able to get to our stores easily and quickly. Diminishment in the real or perceived ease of access would have adverse economic impact on our business and damage our brand image.

We are requesting an analysis of the economic, social, health and environmental costs—direct, indirect and cumulative—associated with the impact to traffic and roads. This analysis should be done in the context of both the current and also the likely future traffic.

We are requesting that you mitigate the risk posed to traffic and roads 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