

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 downtown economy. In particular, please consider:

1. Increased train traffic effect on:
 - a. Public traffic flow
 - b. Commercial trucking (deliveries, etc.)
 - c. Emergency services
 - d. Motor vehicle safety
 - e. Noise pollution
 - f. Air pollution due to diesel particulates and coal loss
 - g. Soil pollution from coal runoff
 - h. The "Water Front Re-development Project"
 - i. Real estate values of downtown businesses and condominiums

2. The Gateway Pacific Terminal's effect on downtown Bellingham's image, especially with regard to:
 - a. Tourism
 - b. Relocation (desirability as a residential area)
 - c. National reputation as a sustainability center

A healthy and vibrant downtown Bellingham with continued focus on high-density population growth centers is of significant importance to us. The city of Bellingham has spent many years cleaning up

past industrial pollution and the Gateway Pacific Terminal project could irreparably damage this positive headway. This reversal of the city's character would have serious negative economic impacts. Diminishment to the desirability of downtown Bellingham due to impacts from any or all of the factors listed above would have an 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 the downtown. 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 Bellingham's downtown by not allowing any development or activity at the site.

Sincerely,



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