

December 13, 2012

GPT/Custer Spur EIS c/o CH2M Hill

1100 112th Ave NE, Suite 400

Bellevue, WA 98004

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dan Burwell. I live in Bellingham, Washington on the cross streets of Henry Street and Eldridge Avenue. Our house is 300 feet from the tracks that will be used to haul coal to the Gateway Pacific Terminal if it is built. I am concerned about property devaluation of my home and my City and region caused by the coal trains passing through the region where I live. I would like a study completed to understand the economic impacts of property devaluation caused by increased train traffic and the related increased pollution, noise and lack of access caused by the projected 18 1.5 mile long trains passing very near my home and thousands of other residences and business's surrounding the track corridor.

Recent preliminary studies by certified appraisers have determined that properties adjacent to the train track corridor could devalue from 1 to 20 percent. This decrease in value will have huge economic implications to homeowners wishing to improve their homes using home equity loans. Retirees may also suffer from a reduced nest egg if they want to sell their home and land in order to fund their retirement. Is this loss in property value less than the value of the jobs created by the project? Are county governments prepared to reduce taxes based on decreased assessed property values caused by the approval of the Gateway Pacific Terminal? Are the proponents of the Gateway Pacific Terminal willing to compensate property owners for the decreased value? Are they willing to compensate local county governments for the decrease in tax revenue? Property devaluation is a foreseeable impact stemming from lack of access to businesses and neighborhoods and increased pollution caused by coal dust escaping gondola cars and diesel emissions from the train engines.

I would like the EIS to consider property value impacts to properties within 1 mile of the corridor. The Puget Sound basin is heavily populated and connected to waterfront areas adjacent to the train track corridor.

A study could be accomplished using historical land value data from other areas of the world affected by a significant increase in pollution generating train traffic. With this land value data, a realistic determination of lost property value can be weighed against the limited economic benefits of the jobs created by the trains and shipping needed to export coal to China to determine if the project will impact the human environment in a net positive or net negative way.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Dan Burwell
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