

Charles West  
PO Box 361  
Orcas, WA 98280

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Significant adverse impact of proposed coal export terminal Cherry Point

My name is Charles West and I live on Orcas Island.

For the past 35 years, both professionally and for personal pleasure, I have videotaped on, around, above and below the waters of San Juan County and nearby environs. As an active scuba diver I've seen much of our occasionally unusual and often fragile marine life first hand. My family and I paddle, fish, view whale and marine life, and hike the shorelines and trails of our island parks. Occasionally, I hunt in the marshlands the buffer the mainland from the salt water of the sound.

As the citizen of an island county, I am sensitive to the critical importance that the health of our nearby waters has on the well being of our community. In the many years I've spent on the water, I've seen of tens of thousands of visitors and residents paddling and fishing the waters, and enjoying the awesome spectacle of our resident whale populations. A fine for pollution or unsafe operations will not replace the health of our waters.

I am particularly concerned the effect that coal loading and increased shipping will have on our aquatic environment. Coal dust suspended in the water of the terminal can have the effect of killing off shoreline marine life including the eel grass which acts as a nursery for important food species. Frigid, storm force winds are a common winter occurrence as they race out of the Frasier Valley just north of Cherry Point. What effects could those winds have on loading ships?

Speaking of shipping operations, the coal ships will not have available the type of emergency response support that is mandated for oil tankers by the Revised Code of Washington. With an increase in daily shipping traffic, what would happen in case of loss of power, or collision, or accidental grounding? Almost without a doubt, the ships will be foreign flagged. Will their crews be able to operate at the high level of efficiency that we would expect of an American flagged vessel?

I'm concerned about the ships, the bulk carriers, themselves. The ships proposed are Capesize that start at a capacity of about 175,000 tons, with the new ultra large versions reaching 300,000, even 400,000 tons. They have single engines and single hulls. They can carry about 10,000 tons in bunker oil, and they need water 33 meters to operate. What happens in case of an accident? With ships that big, small mistakes can be catastrophic. In 1994, the bulk carrier *Trade Darling* broke in half at the dock due to

incorrect loading. It was towed off and sunk. Just last year, the *Vale Beijing*, the largest ship of its class, sprang a leak as it was being loaded. It had to be towed away from the dock before it sank. What effect will accidents like that have on our environment when they happen here?

#

Cl R Went

11/03/12