

First name: David

Last name: Olson

Email: dealson@hinet.org

Address: 2940 Squaticum Parkway

City, State, Zip: Bellingham WA 98225

Phone: N/A

Would you like to be added to the mailing list? Yes No

Note: Any information provided to the agencies will be posted on the website and may be released to a third party as part of the agencies' record for this action. This includes the release of identifiable personal information such as personal name, address, phone number, etc., that is provided in the response.



Combined NEPA/SEPA

Environmental Impact Statement
Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur

Place
Stamp
Here

GPT/BNSF Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies
c/o CH2MHILL
1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004

I am a Whatcom County physician, and I'd like to speak today about the health impacts of the diesel particulate pollution that will result from the huge increase in rail and marine traffic. Diesel engines produce toxic particles that are able to reach deep into the lungs with every breath. This board has already heard about the specific dangers of diesel particulate matter (or dpm). I'd like to provide my perspective from reviewing the latest medical research.

In my work as a physician, I am bound by oath to treat my patients using the most up to date information possible. If I apply that same standard to the current EPA regulations on diesel particulates, I find those regulations fall short in protecting human health. The current standard for particulate pollution was set in 1997. In 2006 and most recently, in 2011, the Scientific Advisory Board for the EPA has recommended a substantial tightening of those regulations by almost 30 %. This recommendation results from a review of the *literally hundreds* of studies that show that severe health effects can and do occur at pollution levels substantially below the current mandate. Virtually every month, cutting edge research reinforces this point. In February of this year, the Archives of Internal Medicine featured 3 research studies outlining the risks of stroke, dementia, and heart disease caused from dpm levels that were previously considered as "safe." This information was not gleaned from an activist website, but from the official publication of the American Medical Association. None of these researchers shout, and none of them wave signs, but the message could not be more clear to myself and my colleagues who see the people of Whatcom County every day in our clinics.

Fortunately, the Washington Dept of Ecology recognizes the shortcomings of our federal regulations, and has produced an excellent study on the DPM Reduction Strategy for Washington State. (For the record Pub # 06-02-022). This document concludes that " it is necessary to accelerate the rate of diesel emission reductions, and to reduce DPM beyond what is mandated by law."

This same document finds that marine and rail freight currently produce a combined total of 28% of our state's burden of particulate pollution, and that the impact of that pollution is currently concentrated in Spokane, in Seattle and the

rest of the Puget Sound, including our county. Thus, the impact is *already* felt in exactly the areas through which the trains will run and the ships will sail.

When considering whether to permit this project, then, I would ask the decision makers to use the best and most current medical evidence in reviewing the impacts. If done correctly and thoroughly, I suspect that the conclusion will be that any strategy that increases DPM by any amount is ill-advised, for our county, our state, and our region.

