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EVERGREEN ISLANDS

November 12, 2012

To: GPT/BNSF Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies
c/o CH2M HILL; 1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400; Bellevue, WA 98004

Re: Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point Proposals

On the behalf of Evergreen Islands, I am submitting the following comments regarding the proposals for the Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point and the Custer Spur Projects.

What is the danger to marine mammals in general and the endangered Orca Whale in particular, by the increase of marine shipping traffic?

Will there be an increase of boating collisions with the Orcas?

Will the noise and increased traffic have an effect on their food sources?

Will this cause great stress to the three southern resident “pods”, inhibiting their ability to feed, reproduce and navigate in Rosario Strait and the Strait of Georgia?

The Strait of Georgia is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Cherry Point’s eight mile shoreline currently receives 850 annual transits from it’s existing marine piers. The transport of 54 million metric tons, per year, of cargo from the proposed terminal would add additional, estimated 442 – 947 transits by the year 2026.

These ships, by SSA Marine’s own description, will be “Capesize”. Meaning, they are too large to fit through the Panama Canal. They are more than 950 feet long and can carry 80,000 to 199,000 tons of cargo. Can you picture an Orca whale pod like deer on the freeway; they would have no chance to get out of the way of one of these ships.

Marine traffic associated with collisions with animals, is one of the three main threats to endangered resident killer whales. Marine researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution analyzed all known deaths of 8 species of large whale , between 1970- 2009, in the northwest Atlantic and concluded that the protection measures seem to have had no impact on preventing whale deaths, according to a study published in *Conservation Biology*.

In conclusion, this massive increase of marine traffic will be detrimental to the marine life of the San Juan Islands, in general, and the Orcas specifically.

Respectfully yours,

Arlene French, Trustee