

GATEWAY PACIFIC TERMINAL EIS SCOPING HEARING

Monday, November 5, 2012

McIntyre Hall
2501 E College Way
Mt. Vernon, Washington

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3:52 p.m.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Judy Baker. And my address is 1504 Alpine View Place, Mt. Vernon, Washington, and I've lived in the Skagit Valley for 40 years.

Mt. Vernon is undertaking a major downtown revitalization project on the revetment overlooking the Skagit River. A flood wall has been installed and old buildings demolished. The new plan calls for a pedestrian walkway and plaza flanked by stores with townhouses above. This pleasant waterfront area will greatly improve our downtown and enhance Mt. Vernon as a tourist destination.

If the Cherry Point terminal were to be built, there would be 18 more long coal trains a day passing between I-5 and our downtown area. Please study the impact that these trains would have on the economic health of downtown Mt. Vernon, taking into consideration traffic delays between the freeway and the river as well as the noise and pollution of coal-bearing rail traffic.

THE SPEAKER: Hello. My name's Bill Bowman. I was at Friday Harbor on Saturday to speak of this, and I want to continue with my part two. There's a concept called "right livelihood" which basically means doing no harm. Weapons manufacture isn't in this category nor is

attrition or otherwise. Please consider right logic and right livelihood. A Sunday pastor might say to his congregation consider your soul. Well, for me, my soul is directly linked to a healthy environment. Clean air and water legislation were implemented in the 1970s, yet we continue to have polluted air, soil, and water because corporate investment interests hold sway over moral ground for obvious reasons.

As I understand it, scoping allows us to voice our communities' concerns. These concerns are tallied and then reduced to a few, somewhat arbitrarily, the majority discarded and few to be mitigated, and then the permit is issued. This is the box of allowable activism, and it sort of makes you feel participatory in your community. Yet still, most often the permit is allowed.

Thus, Gateway Pacific Terminal with its mountains of coal awaiting shipment to China or anywhere else can claim to bring a hundred or thousand or ten thousand jobs to us through a multiplier effect; and from these mountains of coal, the coal dust will be blown throughout our region's air to be inhaled and into the soil and water to become part of the food chain.

A pro coal video shows coal cars being uniformly scrapped and then sprayed with a glue-like substance to incase the dust, but really how effective can such a

membrane be as the coal settles in the railroad car aboard a jostling, fast-moving train for a thousand miles. For that matter, why not have the same done during the open pit mining process or for the mountain loads awaiting shipment or on the coal ships themselves during loading, transit and unloading.

There is video showing high winds blowing black clouds of dust throughout the mountainous coal staging areas. Lots of airborne particulates. Given this understanding and supposed concern, can we agree this stuff is environmentally harmful and support industries that pursue a sustainable, renewable paradigm replete with thousands of other life-sustaining jobs instead?

THE SPEAKER: My name is Dennis Parent. I live in the Mt. Vernon area. I have been a lifetime resident of the northwest and a commercial fisherman for 34 years. I strongly oppose the construction of a coal export terminal at Cherry Point as it would damage or destroy aquatic ecosystems systems at the terminal site including herring.

Herring sites such as the area near Cherry Point have been wiped out in much of the west coast. Since we as taxpayers are spending tens of millions of dollars trying to save our salmon runs, it seems foolish to destroy the very food source the salmon depend upon. And as the herring go, so does the Orca whales.

I am also very concerned about the coal freighters proposed in this operation. They are among the biggest ships on the ocean and they make tremendous underwater noise with their propellers and sonar devices. Our Orca pods are under severe stress as it is with both food scarcity and noise stress from human operations.

Please include these concerns in your scoping process.

I'm also very concerned about the coal train traffic killing off the downtown areas of corridor cities such as Burlington and Mt. Vernon, and I base this upon my own aversion to dealing with train delays. I will avoid those areas. Again, it seems this coal train proposal directly opposes stated public policy and taxpayer investment to revitalize older city core retail areas.

Finally, I am a new grandfather, and I will say on behalf of all the kids out there that selling coal to Asia is a bad idea. Giving them cheap energy will cost us millions of jobs in the long run. Giving them coal will accelerate global warming and violent climate change. And don't forget their pollution blows right back to us so we get a double pollution effect from our own coal.

I say leave old coal in the ground and let the northwest lead the world in new clean, energy.

On behalf of our grandchildren, the scoping

process must include future global warming effects.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Vernon Vander Pol. I was hunting in Grand Cash, Alberta. That's where the coal is loaded for Twawassen. We watched the coal train load. There was no dust. It looked like it was wetted down. And they run four train loads a day out of there, a hundred car train loads a day, and there's a coal there for a hundred and fifty years when they started. It all goes to Japan. Japan built the whole city. And I wonder if this is above projected rise of the sea. It's already come up 11 inches they said. And all the railroads will have to relocate then too. We saw no dust. We've been there when it was bare ground, we've been there when it was snow, and there was no dust in the snow. It was loaded right across from the city, where there was coal dust and a lot of young couples and hundred of kids there, and they lived just across the river where we were watching them load.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Howard Pellett, and I'm from Guemes Island, Washington. I'm currently a candidate for a legislative position in District 40. I am concerned about the output of five coal terminals, over 100 million tons of -- hundred million tons of coal burned annually if it's exported. I'm concerned because of my belief that global climate change is real. I think that we've seen evidence of that in this last couple of years, and I think

that if we don't -- if we don't stop burning coal, whether it's here or exported, we will suffer the consequences. And the significance of that is that I believe that the future of life on earth is at stake and also my decedents.

I think it would be wise if a programmatic EIS was instituted the first time out instead of waiting for a court decision later to dictate that one be done.

THE SPEAKER: Vince, V-I-N-C-E, O'Halloran, O, apostrophe, H-A-L-L-O-R-A-N, president of the Puget Sound Ports Council, Maritime Trades Department AFL-CIO.

The Puget Sound Ports Council, Maritime Trades Department AFL-CIO supports the building of the Gateway Pacific Terminal. This facility is designed to be a zero-emission terminal. That is the stated plan of the developer. We support and approve a plan that will put zero emissions into the atmosphere, as should all the members of our community.

We also support the plan of this terminal to release zero pollutants into the surrounding water. Unlike terminals sited in Canada and recently permitted to expand, the proposal at Cherry Point allows for some mitigation on eelgrass, other aquatic life, and a review of the best science in its design and in the study still being prepared as part of the permit process.

We are not supporting a just-say-no approach to

this project. It is too dangerous to our water and air quality to allow a less environmentally-regulated nation to capture the advantage of this multi-commodity pier infrastructure. This infrastructure will have a material bearing on maritime jobs and businesses in the northwest region and improve the ability of the maritime cluster to thrive in the north Puget Sound.

To that end, we're asking for a full economic analysis of the impact of the facility on the region.

We're also asking clearly that this be a site specific EIS in keeping with other major infrastructure projects and according to the current position of the ACE.

THE SPEAKER: My name is John Munson. I'm a retired longshoreman, and I'd like to talk about issues that I feel should be included in the EIS, one of those things being the -- an economic analysis of the project and what are the important things that's going to be to the community as far as improving the economics of the whole county.

I'd also like a thorough examination, a rational examination, of train traffic through -- into and out of the terminal and along the route. I think that we should -- I think that we should not have a programmatic EIS but have an EIS limited to the project because you're making distinctions against this project if you're handling

it in a way that's different than other environmental projects have been handled.

The -- I'd also like an analysis of vessel traffic because the 430 -- 480 ships that are going to be coming in through the Rosario Strait to come into the terminal are a drop in the bucket compared to the 3200 ships a year that cross the Columbia River Bar, and I think there's a whole lot of hysteria being fomented about the prospect of this -- of this being -- this ship traffic coming in. The Port of Rotterdam has a hundred vessels a day that transverse their -- their shipping channels.

So I think that a whole lot of this is based on nothing more than hype, hysteria, and hyperbole about the effects that are not really going to happen. And hopefully they will continue with the process. A programmatic EIS would -- or a comprehensive EIS would be -- would go too far. This should be treated just like anything else.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you for providing such a broad range of options for public input into the scoping process. My name is Steve Garey. I would encourage the most comprehensive impact statement as possible, something we might consider an EEIS. That is an economic as well as an environmental impact statement. There are those who will condemn the project, as well as those would support it, who will do so without regard to either the benefits or the

impact. Those who advocate for or against the project in that manner are all shortsighted and I believe irresponsible. The commodities terminal at Cherry Point has both tremendous benefits, as well as consequences associated with it. A fair and impartial EEIS will accurately identify and weigh all of them so that wise decisions can be made in the best interests of our communities. Conjecture, emotion, and exaggeration should play no rule.

I believe the most significant benefits of the project are the job creation and the tax revenue associated with the economic activity. The high-paid full-benefit jobs that characterize both the construction and the operation of the facility are badly needed. The longer term operations and maintenance jobs and the tax revenue the activity creates are of particular importance to the many communities as well as to the State. These benefits should receive the highest consideration.

The most significant impacts are the potential delay and disruption of vehicle traffic in the many communities the rail lines pass through. The rail service benefits all these communities, but increased rail traffic can also present significant problems. Our communities cannot afford to have police, fire, or ambulance service delayed by rail traffic in communities that have no way

over, under, or around the tracks. All possible mitigations, including overpasses, underpasses, and scheduling, needs to be considered to minimize disruption of traffic related to public safety or health. The corporations that will profit from this activity should be expected to provide significant resources needed to mitigate these impacts.

Some of the tax revenue from the project should also be used for mitigation. Though it may be outside the scope of this project, mitigating increased rail traffic will be required for most all future industrial investments in our region. Realistic strategies to fund these improvements may be considered another long-term benefit to the economic vitality of our communities.

Steve Garey, president, United Steelworkers Local 12-951, Mt. Vernon, Washington.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Pat Hammond. I am very much against this transport of coal. I believe that coal is an extremely bad thing for our atmosphere, for the entire world. I also believe that coming through our Skagit Valley, that it will disrupt a great amount of traffic and will be very much against anything that would be good for us. And I do not believe that it's going to create a great many jobs. That's it.

THE SPEAKER: A Peck of Coal, with apologies to

Robert Frost. Ingrid Hinton.

Coal dust always blowing through town, except when
a rainstorm lays its down. And I am one of the citizens
told some of that glowing dust is gold.

All the coal dust the wind blows high, looks like
gold in sunset sky, and we like children are being told all
that coal dust is really gold.

But coal mongers cover the truth with the lie that
no dust is scattered from trains flying by. That's gold
they say, with a wink and a smile, that the coal trains
scatter mile after mile.

But such is life in the evergreen state, coal dust
soon will direct our fate. It will pollute our waters, get
into our food, stop the traffic, and darken our mood.

The black stuff you see covering the trees that
makes you cough and make you sneeze, that gets in your eyes
and fills your pores, licks at windows and sneaks through
doors.

That we are told creates jobs and money, it will
pour into town like milk and honey. But to follow the line
of these propagators, we will soon look like pigs wearing
respirators.

My name is Ingrid Hinton. I work at the Skagit
Valley Family YMCA in Mt. Vernon. I'm concerned about the
increased number of local trains per day, from 3 to 21,

that would adversely affect my work environment and the work environment of my friends. We depend on the patronage of the public, and many routes to our facility have railroad crossings. I request a study to be done to determine how this would affect traffic flow. I do not want to be a factor whereby we could lose business because people find it a nuisance to deal with increased train traffic.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Arlene French. I reside in the beautiful San June Islands, one of the most scenic and wildlife-filled places in the world. Today I'm speaking as a board member of Evergreen Island and one of our concerns is: 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 in inhibiting their ability to feed, reproduce, and navigate in Rosario Strait and in the Strait of Georgia?

The Strait of Georgia is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world, and the transport of 54 million metric tons of cargo from the proposed terminal will add an additional 442 to 947 transits per year by the

year 2026.

Marine traffic associated with collisions with animals is one of the three main threats to the endangered resident killer whales. Marine researchers at Wood Hole Oceanographic Institution analyzed all known deaths of eight species of large whale in the northwest Atlantic and concluded that the protection measures seemed to have had no impact on preventing whale deaths.

Cherry Point herring are a vital food source for the endangered Chinook salmon, which are in turn a primary food for the resident Orcas. What effect will the coal dust from the loading of the supersized ships have on the herring population?

In conclusion, the massive increase of marine traffic will be detrimental to the marine life in the San Juan Islands.

THE SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Carolyn Gregg, and I'm a resident of Mt. Vernon, and I am very concerned about the marine environment. This is important to tourism in our area and once ruined, it can't be replaced. When we go out in our 22-foot boat, we're warned to stay 200 yards from the Orcas. These ships will not be able to stay 200 feet from or 2 -- from anything, 200 yards from anything.

I would like the Department of Ecology to be

vigilant in assessing the damage to the marine mammals and the herring that feed the salmon runs because those are important components of the environment and the economy here. I don't think it's a good idea to trade future jobs for those that are already existing in tourism and in fishing.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: My name is David Gladstone. I'm speaking on behalf of my wife Melinda and myself. We live on Camano Island. I have four points to make, and I will make them succinctly.

One, there is no such thing as clean coal. Clean coal is an oxymoron.

Two, this is not about jobs. It is about whether we, as a state, have the character and the backbone to stand up and say it is more important to protect our families and ourselves from the proven ravages of coal dust and the coal-burning-induced excess carbon in the air than obtaining a few jobs tainted by this coal menace.

Three, those coveted jobs should come instead from equaling the energy playing field by taking some portion of the subsidies provided to coal, oil, gas, and nuclear and using those moneys to help make solar, wind, geothermal, and wave-produced energy more cost competitive.

Last, my family and I will be adversely impacted

due to the noise, air pollutants, traffic delays, effects on infrastructure, degraded land and marine environments and the global impacts of the use of this coal.

Each of these impacts should be measured and addressed in the environmental impact statement.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Becky Deryckx. I've been a resident of this community for the last 35 years. My grandparents lived and worked here, and I moved here as an adult because of the beauty of this region and the quality of life. My children were raised in this valley and my grandson lives within four miles of the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal. I've had more than two decades of experience as a paramedic and nurse, and I am presently employed with a cardiology practice here in the area.

I have several environmental concerns about the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal and would ask that the scope of the environmental impact statement take a look at and address each of them in turn.

My first concerns are local. Mt. Vernon is bisected by no fewer than six at-grade crossings, and I think that attention needs to be paid to the physical and taxpayer-borne changes that traffic revision/diversion will have on my community.

We need the EIS to look at the possibility that

the noise and weight of coal-bearing trains will weaken the foundations of our historic downtown, complicate access to our businesses, and diminish our place as a destination point and gateway for those who come to visit our tulip fields, see wintering migratory waterfowl, or visit the San Juan Islands.

We also need the scope of the study to include the possible long-term health risks to the people of this area. Coal dust and blowing particulates are only part of the issue. Increased diesel fumes and residue also pose a threat to our children and to those who live anywhere close to the rail lines.

I have personally experienced the bleak frustration of sitting in the back of an ambulance that was blocked at a railroad crossing while en route to the hospital and have seen critical minutes lost as rail cars rolled by. I need to know how 18 additional mile-and-a-half-long trains per day may affect outcomes of those who are suffering heart attacks, respiratory arrest, or major trauma.

I have other environmental concerns that are more regional. I am worried about the disruption of ferry traffic.

THE SPEAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Glade. I reside at 210 Mansfield Court, Anacortes,

Washington. I am representing Evergreen Islands, an environmental organization dedicated to protecting the environments of Skagit County's marine islands.

EI urges that the federal and local agencies initiate a full-blown programmatic environmental impact statement to address the onslaught of massive natural resource extraction that currently is being considered in the northwest corner of the United States.

On October 1st, 19-- 2010, the City of Anacortes and Tethys Enterprises Water Service formed an agreement for the City to provide 5 million gallons a day of water and 2 million gallons a year. City of Anacortes on July 31st applied for a UGA expansion to convert 11 acres of Skagit rural land to Anacortes growth area to provide a building site for the Tethys bottling plant.

The Tethys bottling plant will require a -- 100-car water trains to transport the water and the -- request the programmatic EIS because it -- the affected environment is a broad geographic area which is regional in scope, crossing political boundaries and covering numerous ecosystems.

Bakken Oil trains from Epping, North Dakota, to Anacortes, Washington, 1200 miles through Montana, Idaho, and Washington. Coal trains from Douglas, Wyoming, 1600 miles through Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Washington.

Water trains from Anacortes to points yet undetermined.

The range of alternatives includes future land use scenarios with differing objectives. Unit trains, coal trains, water trains. Oil refineries, BP at Cherry Point, Shell and Tesoro at March Point. Water bottling plant, Tethys enterprises at Turners Bay.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Miguel Perry. I've listened to the comments by people, and it's been bothering me a little bit because I don't see any bicycles here. Most people have driven here. They're very concerned about the effects that the coal will have in the environment, but they themselves are driving cars when we know that the United States is one of the biggest consumers of oil and that is creating problems in the environment and global warming.

Trying to stop the construction of the Gateway Pacific Terminal based on the fact that what it's going to do, I think we have to take individual responsibility, and I don't see any of these people that are so -- bringing fear into the public about the future consequences that could happen doing their part.

We -- somebody told me some time ago that fear is fate in reverse. Any time you go in reverse, you're not moving forward. And if this community has to move forward, they need to, like everything else in life, take a risk.

And because the construction of this project will create jobs, not only for construction workers and later on for people in this community, but also will create opportunities for youth.

Today one of highest numbers of unemployment is among young people. I see everybody here raising their hand against this project and the construction of this project to be elderly people. I don't see a lot of young people. Young people need to be given opportunities to go into an apprenticeship, and I believe that this project will bring revenue and infrastructure that will create taxes that later on lead to more jobs.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Robert Anderson. I live on Guemes Island. I'm a retired minister. I raise a moral question, which I realize probably doesn't have a lot of currency in today's economic arguments. But I wonder about the moral issue around the people proposing to use public space and disrupt people's lives without paying a hundred percent mitigation costs as part of the process. It seems to me I would listen more favorably to some of the arguments in favor of the terminal and the coal process, coal transport, if I felt they were contributing their fair share of mitigation.

The second issue is my wife tends towards asthma and has recurring stroke problems. And if the coal trains

come through and I'm concerned about getting to the hospital in Mt. Vernon, you can rest assured that several things are going to happen. My economic investment in Mt. Vernon or Burlington is going to be near zero. I'm going to find other places to shop and so on, so I won't be inconvenienced. I will come over here as little as possible. I would probably go to Oak Harbor to shop. No one's talking about the economic impact of people changing their shopping habits because of the inconvenience of the coal trains or their habits of where they go to find medical care.

A third item which concerns me is why on earth we would want to help our biggest economic competitor in the world, namely China, by giving them cheap coal so they can out-compete us on the economic world market. That makes no sense to me whatsoever.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Richard Reese. I would like the EIS to determine how many jobs and job opportunities will be lost due to the each individual community needing to cover 95 percent up to a hundred percent of the railroad upgrades and improvements. My concern -- I'm all for jobs. I think, you know, we need jobs. There's no doubt about that. But not these jobs.

My concern is that jobs up and down the rail line, police, fire, hazmat, hospital, community bike trails,

services for the elderly, all of these things will be -- will come under -- they'll be affected negatively by the coal trains' need for railroad upgrades. The money has to come from somewhere. Even -- just in Mt. Vernon, say there were a hundred million dollars worth of upgrades to be done, that's \$95 million that has to come out of the community of Mt. Vernon. And where does that money come from?

The loss of jobs, the loss of opportunities is significant and important.

I want to suggest also that the one of the things that would be lost is the resilience of a community to even consider planning for the future, to consider new opportunities for the future. Currently if a job possibility or a training possibility comes up, what happens is people will say, oh, we can't even consider that, where's the money going to come from? So the effect of net loss of jobs and the effect of the loss of resilience and creativity for planners.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Susan Redd, and I live on Cook Road in Burlington. Living on Cook Road and being only one mile from the rail crossing near I5, I strongly oppose the delay for emergency services, fire, ambulance, police which the coal trains will bring.

Furthermore, I oppose exporting coal to China, building a coal center in the Cherry Point area, violating the sacred space of Native Americans, threatening marine life, air quality, farming, and the entire route from Billings, Montana, to northwest Washington.

Please remember the mistakes of past coal usage and transport. The pollution will kill people, plants, and fish.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I am Fay Mafnas, and I'm representing the Stanwood Area Merchants' Association or SAMA is an organization comprised of merchants large and small serving customers in the greater Stanwood area. We have some concerns about the proposed coal terminal and trains and ask that you study any and all of the possible negative financial impacts on the Stanwood area merchants. We have three questions.

How will the proposed increase of train traffic negatively impact the financial viability of merchants in Stanwood's downtown business core, particularly east Stanwood?

Is it likely that shoppers will be forced to avoid the downtown core area particularly east Stanwood and choose other places to shop to avoid the train delays?

How will the increased train traffic hamper

economic revitalization in east Stanwood?

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: This is Julian Epps, and my concern for the environmental impact study is that an extensive study be done on everyone and everything and every business and everything that is directly along the rail lines and a couple blocks off.

I'd like to see an extensive study of what will immediately happen, the direct impacts and the indirect impacts. Because the people along the rail line are the majority of the people, overwhelming majority of the people, affected by this. And I'd like to see a list of the benefits and the negative impacts that are going to happen and just simply compare the two and make an informed, responsible decision based off the rights of the majority of the people affected who live right along the rail lines.

THE SPEAKER: Thomas Lindsey, L-I-N-D-S-E-Y. We are living in a time where critical decisions affecting the future of our species are important to be made. We need to understand that our future and our children's future and indeed the future of humanity depends upon the kind of quality decisions we make today.

We are burning ancient sunlight, which is indeed what coal is. From the carboniferous era some 200 million

years ago, we are blessed with an energy source that has built an industrial base that has grown a nation, but we need to consider the course for the future generations of energy.

Coal is still in the equation, but I believe we need to make a critical decision at this juncture because if we don't, the cumulative effects of greenhouse gases, the cumulative effects of the poisons that are -- the poisons from coal extraction at the source, at the rivers, the streams, the coal dust that -- that happen at that extraction point as well as along the transportation route are going to severely impact our communities. We need to emphasize green energy for the future.

THE SPEAKER: C L Willis, W-I-L-L-I-S. I would like, number one, to comment on heavy equipment and rail noise that's generated at a high level that will be a result of 24-hour a day, 7-day a week operations of rail cars and of equipment at port sites where they're moving and loading coal products.

Secondly, I'd like to express my concern about the state of crops and vegetation that are near rail lines as well as near the port industrial site and their health due to the results of coal dust that may poison their vegetation.

Third, I'm concerned about the effects on

eelgrass, which is a key environmental natural plant that preserves healthy living environment for marine animals.

And fourth, I'm concerned about the noise level and how it may affect Orcas, particularly when they are calving and so forth, their sensitivity to staying put during this sensitive time.

THE SPEAKER: My name's John Barnard. I live in Alger, Washington, been a resident here for about 30 years, and I'm incredibly concerned about the health of Puget Sound. We all know that no matter what our political leaning is that Puget Sound is slowly dying. There's a lot of reasons for that. A lot of people are trying to slow it down and help it. This coal terminal would just be another nail in the coffin really.

But I'd like to see a complete study of the impacts of the terminal, the ships, all the coal dust flying all over.

Also, the -- the economics of it will only benefit a very few, and I won't go into who they are. And we all know what -- you know, the social and cultural effects of all the communities these trains are going through would just be devastating. You know, this is going to cost the small business people, the community infrastructures, millions and millions and millions of dollars. And the amount of jobs are minimal really, 2-, 3-, 400 jobs at the

most when our state needs hundreds and thousands of jobs.

And that's it. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Robert A. Hilton, and I have a concern having worked in the nuclear industry that what happens when there are no trains at all due to pent-up agitation and people actually considering and blowing up a railroad bridge to stop the coal trains? If one doesn't think such things happen, we have to remember what happened to the Murrah Federal Building that was blown up by Timothy McVeigh in Oklahoma City.

One has to consider what would happen if there were no trains for several weeks while repair was made to an existing bridge.

One thing that would happen in Skagit County is that we wouldn't be able to export our garbage down to Oregon via the train and it would just pile up in Skagit County somewhere and probably constitute an environmental hazard for all the runoff into the soil and everything else affecting fish.

So there are other obvious problems with train stoppage, and these need to be accepted as a possibility and their mitigation time examined and the environmental effects fully appreciated. It's not a simple problem. We have TSA and we have onboard armed experts on aircraft to protect the public on the airplane, and we need to protect

our bridges too. So this is an added cost to the public and to the company to protect the right-of-way so that such things don't happen.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Randy Travenner.

Shipping coal to China is wrong and a crime against the future of our children and the planet. Our energy needs must be met in a more evolved responsible fashion. Burning coal turned the skies of London black 200 years ago. The Chinese are now turning their skies black. Smog and acid rain have flown across the Pacific on winds from China for years. I have been in Beijing unable to see a quarter mile through the smog from their coal-burning power plants. The consequences of uninhibited coal burning are enormous for all of us.

Climate change, ever more powerful storms, rising sea levels will effect us more and more dramatically in coming years. We must all change the way we do things.

Shipping coal to China is only digging the environmental hole we are in deeper, all this for short-term economic profit.

I say no to coal trains, no to coal terminals, and no to coal exports. We owe it to the future.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Tanya Tavenner. I'm from Stanwood, Washington, and I have degrees in astronomy and

physics.

So what I wanted to talk about is the global effects of climate change and the fact that any sort of environmental study does need to consider global effects, not just local effects. The reason for this is because current studies show that climate change is going much faster than we first anticipated. All previous studies of climate change that are predicting what would be happening today in 2012 under-predicted dramatically both the increase in average global surface temperature and the effects that that increase would have on our environment.

So what this means is our current models we believe under-predict what will happen in the future because no computer simulation can accurately simulate the entire earth with all of its interconnected systems.

Therefore, what we really need to be aware of is the fact that those models suggest it is possible for a runaway greenhouse to start by 2100 if we continue with our current levels of increase of CO2 into the global atmosphere. It does not matter what country is burning the coal; as long as it goes into the atmosphere, it is part of the global system. Those models could see a runaway greenhouse effect that would kill all life on earth. By 2100 we could see an eight degrees average surface temperature rise.

THE SPEAKER: Ann Brooking. My concerns are the global effects of coal burning and acid rain and the effect of acid rain on the oceans and the coral.

Carbon dioxide, it releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere causing the greenhouse gas. And if we continue at the current rate of combustion, the temperature on our planet will increase and potentially have a runaway greenhouse effect. Nobody knows what would happen if that happened, but it could very likely endanger our grandchildren's safety.

A lot of our oxygen that we breath comes from bacteria in the ocean, so from the acid rain resulting from burning coal would change the pH of the ocean which would effect the bacteria that are sensitive to pH, and that way those bacteria that produce our oxygen could decrease our oxygen supply potentially.

Please study whether this is the case and also to what degree.

Also, I understand the tanks, the coal ships that carry the coal, have to be full of water when they return to the states. Where does that water -- please study what the impacts of that are. Where does the water come from, and where is it dumped? Is it clean? I have concerns about what water from China coming into the Puget Sound might have in it.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I'm Kathy Johnson. I'm representing Pilchuck Audubon Society. We have members in Snohomish County and Camano Island, and I live in Marysville, half a mile away from the train tracks. We will be submitting additional comments, and I tried to organize these comments and realize that it's very difficult because this is a web of effects, just like the web of ecosystems that it will effect.

But it is imperative that the EIS consider the effects of building the port, along with the transport of the coal, along with the mining of the coal, loading the coal on the ships, and burning the coal in Asia. And some of these effects include pollution from coal dust that's going to come off of the train cars and during the loading of ships or in the possible derailments or other spills. Those effects on endangered species listed salmon, marine mammals, and birds. And those fish effects also affect human economics. We're getting into this web. Tourism jobs, fishing jobs, and the -- there are air pollution effects, and those are going to effect forests and farming.

Human health effects, direct effects of traffic interruptions, emergency vehicle delays, economic effects from that all need to be considered.

Effects on school time, school bus transportation,

increased costs for bus drivers due to traffic delays from the trains.

And ground water effects from mining of the coal. Ocean acidification from burning of the coal and all the effects of that.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Liz Findley. I am from the Skagit Valley, Washington, and I am concerned about a number of things, including the effect of this -- these coal trains on the property owners who live along the long length of the railroad tracks, from beginning to end.

Most of us, and I am one, live in older homes and we have some vibration from the trains anyway, and this seems to be increasing as the coal trains have started to increase; and I'm concerned about the stability of my home as well as those of others along the tracks and as well as property values. That is one big concern.

Another thing that I'm concerned about is the blocking of the transportation routes in downtown Mt. Vernon. I have a small business in downtown Mt. Vernon, as do many, and I am concerned that my clients will be able to make it on time to their appointments with me each day.

And obviously people come into town and there are many offices in town where people will have appointments, and this is going to be highly disruptive to the whole

downtown area in addition to the emergency concerns as well.

And I am also concerned about noise pollution and coal dust.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Kate Bowers, and I live in Bow. And what I understand is that right now they're pulling coal out of the Powder River Basin for \$9.20 a ton, selling it on the market to Asia at \$100 per ton. That's a -- that's a thousand percent profit before expenses. And we have a history--Bhopal, Chernobyl, 3-mile Island, Fukushima, et cetera--of environmental disasters that are not paid for afterwards.

I want a \$50 billion damage deposit prepaid, and I want it in the bank hard core. Goldman Sachs, Warren Buffet, they have enough money to pay for this. Peabody Coal, they can pay for it.

And then what I want is the interest on the \$50 billion damage deposit to go to creating local living wage green energy jobs.

That's what I want.

THE SPEAKER: I am Joanie Barbacovi. I live at 1930 Grand Avenue in Everett, Washington. I have serious environmental concerns about the proposed coal export rail transport personally, for the Everett community, for our state, our country, and the world.

I am here today because it's very personal. I have lived and worked in the Everett area for 35 years, lived within the Everett city limits for 27 years, for the past 10 on the bluff above Everett Naval Station and Burlington Northern tracks. I see, smell, hear, and feel the environmental impact of the coal trains now passing below me on a daily basis.

Some particles are -- that are small enough to land on my windowsills are small enough for me, my children, and grandchildren to respire. I have asthma, so I'm especially sensitive. My grandchildren are all under five, and so they, too, are very susceptible.

I see and smell the spewing of diesel as a double engine pulling each coal train sleeps beneath my windows. This past summer, it was so bad I had to keep the windows closed. So much for enjoying the beautiful view of the San Juans. My grandkids, who once eagerly awaited each train, now block their ears and say, "too loud."

THE SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Dr. Doris Brevoort. I'm a home owner in Mt. Vernon for 10 years. My house is on the hill above downtown Mt. Vernon above the railroad tracks. And in the past year, the neighborhood has been very impacted by existing coal trains which cause my house, which is a hundred years old, to vibrate.

The project information document projects 18 daily

trains to and from the Gateway Terminal. Please extend the scope of environmental review for this project to include a study of the cumulative impacts on homes and families near the rail line of these loaded trains coming up the corridor.

I'm concerned with the net impact on my and other older homes as vibration from coal trains shakes lath and plaster, brick and mortar, and indeed the very ground our homes stand on.

I also urge the scope to include the cost to taxpayers of all infrastructure repair, maintenance, or improvements required to accommodate the trains for the duration of their use hauling coal or other materials to the terminal, including upgrade or maintenance of street crossings and maintenance of future replacement of the railroad bridge over the Skagit River.

I request that all projected costs of improvements that would by law become taxpayer responsibilities be included in the scope of this study.

I have volunteered for Mt. Vernon Main Street for hundreds of hours. Our hope is to revitalize Mt. Vernon, not to see it fall to industry bringing coal trains through our town.

The fact that there is just a formula for how much the railroad or the industry needs to pay for the

improvements and the rest falling to taxpayers is a primary concern of mine, and I wish that the impact would clearly state those costs to the taxpayer in perpetuity.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Rob Zwick, and I am an orthopedic surgeon here in Mt. Vernon, and I'm the guy they call at two o'clock in the morning when the motorcyclist hits the tree. They call me to get out of bed and get down there at the hospital and stabilize him and keep him from bleeding to death. So I'm that guy.

And one of the things that we do best as a society is take care of injured people when we get a chance to get them to the hospital, and everybody knows that we expect to be able to do that.

And it's not a stretch to imagine how we would feel when our own lives or loved ones were in jeopardy. So the idea of having to wait for a train to go by and given the numbers of trains that we're hearing and how long they are and how much time will be tied up at each crossing, given that, it's an inevitability that lives will be lost at the train crossing because the ambulance can't get by.

And that means that literally the last thing that that guy is doing in his life is waiting for the train to go by. That's what he's waiting for as he dies.

So I want someone to study, I want you to study,

the potential impact and loss of life for severely injured patients waiting for the train to go by.

Thanks.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Pat McLatchy. I live in Mt. Vernon. I live at the foot of Little Mountain up near Jefferson School. And at two a.m. we can feel our mattress rumbling and rattling from the freight train that goes through at two o'clock, so it does rattle the earth.

But the plain point I want to make here is an illustration on the traffic problems that it will have on backing up traffic for 15 minutes, this monstrous train stop traffic for 15 minutes, up to 15 minutes, in Mt. Vernon and Burlington.

So just consider College Way alone or consider Highway 20 at Burlington alone, backed up for 15 minutes, how -- that will stretch back to Highway 9, it will stretch on the west side, it'll stretch to the freeways, it'll block the freeways.

And then after 15 minutes, the train's gone, and then you've got a traffic jam. How long will it take to clear those traffic jams? Probably another 15 minutes would be my guess. And if those two nice scenarios, you've got 30 minutes a day, the citizens of Mt. Vernon and Burlington have 30 minutes a day, when they can cross the railroad to the other side of town. It's unthinkable,

absolutely unthinkable.

Sirens, police, fire, ambulance, they're going to be jammed up during those 15 minutes of so-called clearing the traffic after the train's gone.

We have to think of that scenario more clearly, more deeply.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Steven H. Johnson, and I am a physician in Mt. Vernon, Washington. Some years ago I served in the public health service in the coal fields of southern West Virginia. I've witnessed firsthand the health issues related to coal.

In recent years I specialized in allergy, where I also witnessed firsthand the increasing incidence of asthma and allergic disease in our population, especially children.

I'm concerned about the health effects, specifically coal dust and diesel exhaust, in the transport of large amounts of coal from the Powder River Basin across multiple states and large population centers to the ports of the Pacific coast.

I'm also the board chair of Children of the Valley, a local nonprofit after-school program for disadvantaged children. Many of our program's children live along the railroad tracks involved in this discussion we're having tonight. I'm concerned that the health of

these children, along with many other children and adults, is going to be adversely affected by the amount of coal dust and diesel particulate matter expelled from these coal trains.

I'm concerned that this could lead to a marked increase in pulmonary diseases, including asthma and chronic bronchitis, allergic disease, heart disease, and lung cancer, with a resulting increase in health care costs.

I would request that your agencies study these health implications, their impacts and consequence, the current research data, as well as the liability issues related to the above health concerns to the full extent of this project.

In addition, should liability be proven, who would be responsible for damages? The scope of these health issues should run the entire length of the proposed coal train from Montana and Wyoming to the Pacific Coast.

In addition to those along the route, the scoping should also include the health issues related to coal dust and diesel exhaust exposure for those working at the coastal loading centers and the ocean ships transporting the coal.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Joan Cross. And I live in Skagit County, and I am concerned about air quality with

particulates from the coal getting into our air and water. Asthma already is a big health problem, and this exacerbates those health concerns.

I've heard also that vessels illegally dump loads of trash just before they come into port to make room for picking up their load, and I wonder how you will monitor that.

Also, climate change is happening, and more coal burning in China affects the whole world via destroying the ozone level as well as blowing winds east to us again. We get polluted again.

The financial cost will effect more businesses in a negative way than create new jobs.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Jay Goodwin. I'm a health care provider in the city of Mt. Vernon. I live in Mt. Vernon, have a business there. I'm concerned about the -- this project from a health care perspective.

Basically the whole project, from mining, transporting, shutting off the towns while the trains go by, the coal dust, the diesel fumes, all those have environmental impacts.

Then once it gets into the boats, then it goes across the oceans. There's possible collisions, there's possible spills, and then it gets burned.

Global warming is not a hoax. It's real. The climate is changing. My mom is without power for a week now in New York. My friends in Vermont are still recovering from a super storm that hit them over a year ago. This is real.

I would formally request that someone from the Department of Defense be put on this panel because they're the only ones that see the effect of climate change as being real.

All of these impacts add stress. All these stresses make it harder for people to stay healthy. All of these toxins from mining, from transporting, from possible spills get into the environment, get into food, get into people's bodies. The bigger the toxic load, the harder it is to stay healthy.

On the positive side, there could be a terminal in Cherry Point. This is one area of the country, the northwest, that has not suffered a water shortage. We're growing lots of good food. That provides lots of excellent jobs. So the terminal could be used to ship the food that's grown here in western Washington. We're not even starting to tap that resource. That provides tons of jobs. We can provide jobs and have a terminal but just not ship dirty coal.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Dory Maubach. I live in

Stanwood, Washington. My main concern is that the coal is even being taken out of the earth and sent to I believe Asia to be burned. In terms of global warming, that is quite an impact.

Secondly, the fact that it's going to travel so far over land exposing coal dust to many communities, increasing rail traffic in my area, it will go past at least two elementary schools in Lakewood and it will be one block away from those schools.

The -- another aspect of this is that the area that they're going in has a wildlife refuge adjacent. It is also a prime birding site for Audubon Societies in the area.

And, let's see, I just think that the impact on global warming is the most important part. There is no reason that we need to dig up the coal and send it elsewhere. It will just encourage other countries to depend on that kind of resource as opposed to clean energy. It will do damage to our country. It will put money in some pockets, and that's probably the main reason for it happening, but I think that that's not -- in this day and age with climate change, that we really cannot just look at that aspect as being the most important aspect.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Helge Anderson, and I live in Sedro-Woolley, and I realized today that this is

not just an issue about the coal trains. It can be any train of the size and length. When each one of these trains are crossing Mt. Vernon, it will cut off the whole town and every railroad crossing will be blocked every time. By one train. And if we have one or two trains of this length coming through Mt. Vernon, it's going to be hundreds and hundreds of cars standing idling at each railroad crossing, and I can just imagine all the fumes from these cars standing there.

I can also imagine emergency vehicles not getting through and people might get lost just because of that reason.

And the whole idea that we mentioned that building overpasses or tunnels, it's not going -- it's not a feasible option either because that will block traffic even more.

Well, we don't need to do this in order to provide a few jobs up in Bellingham, some jobs in Montana, and we kill the whole area. Because there's nothing provided for Skagit.

THE SPEAKER: My name is Nicholas Petrish. I would like to have a fully scoped EIS report that starts at the mine and goes all the way to China and back again, with pollution, the pollution route from China here to the shores of the United States.

I would also like an estimate done of the economic impact on the -- how many workers will lose their jobs here in the United States by fueling factories and jobs in China.

And I would like to have a pentagon study of the strategic detriment of fueling a potential military adversary. Something I ask: Would the pentagon -- which didn't exist in 1941, but would the war department have sent fuel to Japan in 1941 or Germany in 1941? I see us sending fuel to China as a national security issue.

Either the coal stays in the ground or it's used for our own consumption. I would prefer it to stay in the ground.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Mary Anderson, and I live in Sedro-Woolley, Washington State, in Skagit County.

Skagit County is primarily an agrarian county with agriculture a huge economic factor in its success and survival. The amount of trains proposed by this coal train issue which will virtually stop traffic in Skagit County, coupled with the actual coal dust emitted by the coal, will have devastating effects on Skagit County's agricultural production.

Not only will crops of blueberries, cucumbers,

field crops, miscellaneous crops, nursery and greenhouse flora culture and sod, but potatoes, raspberries and strawberries will be adversely affected.

In addition, Skagit County produces 70 percent of the world's spinach seed and 60 percent of the world's cabbage seed. These crops combined produce an economic boon of almost \$256 million to Washington State and Skagit County.

The effects of these coal trains cannot be overstated in its adverse impact on Skagit County.

Thank you very much.

(The hearing was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.)