

James Swift
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January 16, 2013

To: GPT/Custer Spur EIS
c/o CH2M Hill
1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004

To Whom It May Concern:

As a business owner and resident in Whatcom County I am writing to ask that you conduct thorough studies of the following impacts of the Gateway Pacific Terminal.

1. The impact of the train traffic on local and regional economies along the entire train route. This economic impact study should include at a minimum the following:

- The direct financial costs to retail businesses when customers are blocked from reaching their store during business hours by coal trains. Mount Vernon and Marysville both provide good examples of towns where businesses are likely to be personally and directly impacted. *Specifically, what will be the loss of jobs and business closures when small businesses are cut-off from customers by 18 long, slow coal trains?*
- The increased costs to commuters and reduced productivity that results when traffic is delayed at at-grade rail crossings. We've already seen delays at exits on I-5 when coal trains block access roads. With an additional 18 coal trains it seems likely that workers will be delayed in reaching their jobs and commute times may increase. Some of our largest companies and industries are currently sited along I-5 and may be impacted by these delays. *Specifically, what will be the productivity cost to our region when workers are delayed in reaching their jobs and commute times increase? .*
- Impacts to transportation and shipping in Skagit County due to the potential for coal trains blocking access to I-5. There are many at-grade rail crossings in Skagit County where trucks will sit idling, waiting to reach I-5 when coal trains block their route. For instance, the crossings at Highway 20 and at Burlington are busy crossings for businesses in the area. *I ask that you study the financial impacts of the coal train traffic from shipping delays at congested rail crossings in Skagit County.*

- The impact of delays due to increased train traffic at the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma. Washington State businesses ship high-value goods to markets around the world and they rely on swift and predictable access to our ports for shipping. With up to 18 additional long, slow coal trains each day blocking at-grade crossings near our vital port infrastructure, it may take longer for goods produced or grown in Washington to be shipped. I ask that you study the impact of those delays on businesses throughout Washington State. *Specifically, what will be the cost to businesses throughout Washington due to longer shipping times and unpredictable delays?*

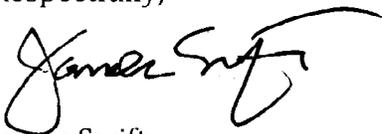
2. Health impacts from elevated levels of diesel emissions near the train tracks. While there will be increased diesel emissions along the entire rail line there are places where the impact will be greater. For instance, the rail lines through the Chuckanut range and south Bellingham cannot be doubled and there are times when diesel engines sit idling near homes. What will be the impact of those emissions to residents in the area? To the extent possible, you should conduct a thorough study to analyze the long-range health impacts and the subsequent costs and reduced quality of life. *Specifically, I ask that you study the increased health risks from idling diesel engines, including reduced air quality and elevated noise.*

3. Potential for using the alternate route up Highway 9 in Acme and the resulting impacts to farms, residents and small businesses in the area. The existing coal trains heading to Canada take the coastal route. But with another 18 coal trains going to Cherry Point combined with the inability of BNSF to double the tracks through the Chuckanut range and Bellingham, it seems logical that they'd consider the Highway 9 corridor. Please study the impact of rail traffic along Highway 9. *Specifically, please study the direct financial impact to businesses along Highway 9 and study the impacts to farmland and agricultural products from diesel emissions and coal dust in the area.*

4. Finally, I ask that your EIS include the most likely alternative for study: no coal terminal. Given the negative environmental and economic impacts from building GPT the most reasonable alternative, and the one that should be studied as the baseline, is that there is no coal terminal.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on this project. SSA Marine proposes to build the largest coal export terminal in North America at Cherry Point and the public and the agencies are right to take exceptional care in studying this. Shipping coal would be a new direction for our state and given the potential for both broad and specific economic harm, the studies must look at the entire state.

Respectfully,



James Swift