

GPT/Custer Spur EIS
c/o CH2M Hill
1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004
Submitted electronically to comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov

Mr. Randel Perry
US Army Corps of Engineers; GPT/Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies

Ms. Alice Kelly
Northwest Regional Office, Department of Ecology

Mr. Tyler Schroeder
Planning and Development Services, Whatcom County

20 January 2013

Subject: Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment

Dear Mr. Perry, Ms. Kelly, and Mr. Schroeder,

As an Edmonds, Washington resident I offer my scoping comments regarding the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point and urge you to fully consider the environmental impacts of the extraction, transport and burning of coal associated with this terminal.

My family has lived in the Seattle area for nearly 150 years. Each generation has seen an industrial boom and each has been impacted by a subsequent economic bust. Constant throughout the generations are numerous lasting, adverse effects of resource extraction leading to environmental and economic degradation followed by associated fiscal and health costs to residents and tax-payers.

Prior to the construction of the first terminal at Cherry Point (1954 Mobil Oil) our waters of Puget Sound were rich with Coho and Chinook salmon runs and Cherry Point supported the largest Pacific herring fishery in the state. Subsequently, as additional terminals were built (1966 Intalco Aluminum and 1971 Atlantic Richfield) our herring stocks plummeted to a remnant of what they once were. The eelgrass and other marine vegetation at Cherry Point that in turn supports the herring fishery has been shadowed by piers and covered with landfill. A once thriving fishing fleet at Anacortes is depleted and our iconic Puget Sound Orca whale population is diminished and contaminated with mercury and heavy metals. It now requires intensive, costly expenditures for artificial production and fish protection to maintain and mimic the salmon runs that two generations ago were natively supported by forage fish at Cherry Point. Seabirds, Dungeness crab and shellfish are also dependent upon a healthy herring and eelgrass ecosystem at Cherry Point. Those biological populations continue to decrease as well.

Peabody Energy, Goldman Sachs and the Whatcom County Council want ever more and now offer a proposed fourth terminal at Cherry Point. The transport of coal from Montana and Wyoming to the

Gateway Pacific Terminal for export to Asian markets will afford us diesel fumes and soot hovering over our towns, our schools and our gardens. In return for their “focus on macroeconomic insights” they offer 500 pounds of coal dust per train along the entire route for no less than 18 times a day. In Edmonds our access to community beaches, dive parks, ferry terminal and businesses will be severely limited by mile-long trains. Our neighborhoods will endure the noise of train whistles at crossings day and night. Our air will be laden with particulates bearing mercury and heavy-metals and the run-off of such particulates will course our streams and Puget Sound.

Direct and immediate effects of coal dust and diesel exhaust will be shouldered by our children in Edmonds, in Marysville, in Mount Vernon and in every community along the way. They will breathe toxic coal dust and diesel fumes as we sit in a baseball stadium in Seattle and as we picnic on the beaches at Golden Gardens, Carkeek and Brackett’s Landing.

Our children, as residents of Puget Sound shoreline communities, will continually need to shore up the foundations of homes and businesses as increased rail traffic and heavier train loads undermine shoreline bluffs. They will pay for the inevitable spills from train derailments and massive coal ships navigating without tug escorts in the Strait of Georgia while Peabody Energy looks for go-arounds to liability.

Ultimately our children will pay an unimaginable price as a consequence of coal combustion. The construction of the proposed Gateway Pacific export facility will bear environmental and social costs extending from the Powder River Basin of Montana and Wyoming, through the Pacific Northwest and across the globe. I urge the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Ecology, and the Whatcom County Council not to further degrade the vitality of the Puget Sound region in the race to fuel competing Asian economies.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Joan E. Poor
Edmonds, WA 98020