

IMPACT OF COAL PROJECT ON SALISH SEA

My name is Mary Lynn Lyke, and I am concerned about the effects of the Gateway Pacific Terminal project on the wildlife in our Salish Sea. Specifically, I am concerned about detrimental impacts to our resident orcas, listed as endangered with federal agencies.

The project will significantly increase vessel traffic on our inland waters. I'd like to see the EIS address questions on:

- To what degree this increase will affect underwater noise in Puget Sound, and how upping the noise might affect the ability of orcas in the J-, K-, and L-pods to echolocate – a critical function for communication, family hunting, and survival. Already researchers suggest resident orcas have to raise their voices to be heard underwater. What happens when the noise grows even louder?
- To what extent will additional vessel traffic in our waters affect the ability of orcas to navigate?
- Coal ships emit large quantities of pollutants from burning bunker fuel. The EIS needs to consider how this additional pollutant will affect our orcas, marine life, and air quality.
- The Exxon Valdez oil spill was linked to the death of dozens of orcas who swam through spoiled waters. In case of a collision, what would the impact of an oil spill from one of the large coal ships be on resident killer whales? Also, as a result of vessel collision, what affect would a spill of coal dust have on marine life, especially on resident orca populations?
- Our orcas already carry heavy loads of PCBs, a contaminant that can affect immune and reproductive systems. Some of these long-lived industrial pollutants come from Asian countries where PCBs are still legal, via air and ocean currents. The proposed Gateway Pacific terminal will ship 50 million tons of coal a year to China. Will the resulting dust, pollutants, and particulate matter similarly come back via our air and waters and further contaminate our endangered marine mammals? What portion of pollution from China can be assigned to this increased coal use? The EIS needs to examine the impacts of this coal-based pollution from Chinese power plants on our marine ecosystem.
- Orcas rely on salmon to survive. Salmon rely on bait fish to thrive. What would be the affect of coal and dust pollution from trains and transference on our Salish Sea bait stock?

Some studies have rated the likelihood of our orcas going extinct as high as 19 percent in the next 100 years. I'm concerned that approval of this project could increase that percentage exponentially.

I do not think this project should proceed without a full investigation of the issues noted.

Thank you,

Mary Lynn Lyke
14351 Jura Drive
Anacortes, WA 98221
360-299-2588
Lyke.ink@gmail.com