

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:54:54 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

In his second inaugural address, President Obama made the following statement:  
"We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires, and crippling drought, and more powerful storms. The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult. But Americans cannot resist this transition. We must lead it."

As a resident of Whatcom County, I am deeply concerned about the potential negative impacts of the coal export terminal proposed at Cherry Point, especially because, by facilitating the burning of tens of millions of tons of coal per year, we would be accelerating cataclysmic climate change tantamount to global suicide.

I ask that the EIS encompass the concerns spelled out by Alexander Gillespie on pages 86-99 of the supporting materials submitted by The Friends of the San Juans together with their group's scoping comment, submitted on 18 January 2013.

Also, on the subject of considering climate change as a legitimately scorable impact of the proposed coal terminal, the GPT Project Information Document states that the primary "need" for the project is the Pacific Rim nations' "need" for exported U.S. bulk commodities, including coal. If this "need" is accepted as a basis for the project, it must be treated consistently throughout the analysis. The assumption that Pacific Rim nations "need" this coal effectively answers the question of the Project's contribution to global climate change and other air pollution impacts. Without the Project, Pacific Rim nations would not have the coal that they "need," and therefore the emissions arising from the combustion of coal exported through the Project are directly attributable to the Project. This "need" component forecloses any argument that other sources of coal would be available (and would contribute equivalent greenhouse gas and other air emissions) if the Project were not constructed.

With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eiscgw.com)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:16:12 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I am a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside of Bellingham. As responsible citizens and taxpayers, my husband and I are naturally concerned about the economic prospects of adjacent Bellingham city, of Whatcom County, of Washington state, and of the entire country. Proponents of the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) claim that its construction and operation will not only bring jobs to the local economy, but will also generate significant tax revenues for local governments.

The Whatcom County Code (20.88.130) requires that the applicant for a major project permit must establish that a proposed major development such as GPT "Will not impose uncompensated requirements for public expenditures for additional utilities, facilities and services..." GPT proponents like to pretend that this project will not have any significant impacts outside the actual terminal site, but the tremendous increase in coal train traffic which would serve the terminal would alone require hundreds of millions of dollars in upgrades and other improvements all along the 1,000+ miles of the BNSF rail corridor from the Powder River Basin to Cherry Point. To assert otherwise would be ludicrous.

Former Whatcom County planning director David Stalheim, in a column in the January 16, 2013 issue of the Cascadia Weekly on tax implications of the coal port proposal, reported that a single grade separation in Ferndale (to separate vehicle traffic and pedestrians from coal trains) is projected to cost \$37.8 million. Stalheim also points out that for communities like Ferndale, "the tax benefits that would accrue from the coal terminal would pay for no more than one grade-separated crossing." Meanwhile, GPT supporters are lying to the public about who must pay for such improvements. The "Friends of BNSF" website page on the GPT (<https://www.friendsofbnsf.com/content/GatewayPacificTerminal>) makes the blatantly false assertion that "All upgrades to Washington state freight railroad infrastructure ARE PAID FOR BY PRIVATE CAPITAL FROM THE FREIGHT RAILROADS, NOT BY TAXPAYER DOLLARS" (my capitals). In fact, the Washington state legislature alone authorized \$13.6 million for 2007-2011 spending on freight rail grant and loan programs (only enough to fund about one third of the Ferndale grade separation). GPT supporters do not like to acknowledge that federal law and court rulings limit railroads' liability for funding such improvements to a mere 5% of their cost.

Grade separations and other such safety and traffic control measures will be necessary in scores of communities along the BNSF rail corridor, imposing "uncompensated requirements for public expenditures" in all of them. And those communities outside Whatcom County will reap no tax or job benefits from the construction or operation of the GPT.

In the EIS please include a thorough analysis of the putative tax revenues at the city, county, and Washington state levels if the proposed GPT were to go into operation. Specifically, please address the following questions:

- 1) Of the tax revenues which GPT proponents claim will accrue to local governments, how much exactly will go to Bellingham and to the other cities in Whatcom County, how much to Whatcom County itself, and how much to Washington state?
- 2) How much of those tax revenues will have to be spent on infrastructure improvements along railroad routes and other projects which will be required to mitigate negative effects of the GPT project?
- 3) Who will pay for all those infrastructure improvements? Will GPT's builder-owners be required to pay such externalized costs of the terminal's construction and operation?

With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:11:55 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I am a resident of Whatcom County, living on a waterfront property on Chuckanut Drive, less than one mile south of the Bellingham city line. The BNSF railroad track runs across our property, between our home and the shoreline. My husband and I decided to purchase our relatively expensive property here in 2009 in part because of the stunning view it offers out toward Bellingham Bay and the San Juan Islands, but also because we deemed it a sound investment, likely to yield a healthy nest egg when we need to sell it and move into small quarters for our "silver" years.

Proponents of the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) claim that it will bring jobs to the local economy, and will generate significant tax revenue for local governments. In your EIS, please examine how much of the local tax revenue proponents claim the terminal will bring to local governments will be offset by long-term declines in property tax revenues due to falling property values in the community, especially for residential, commercial, and industrial properties in close proximity to the BNSF railroad tracks which will carry the long, loud, heavy, and polluting coal trains.

At a recent public forum on economic impacts of the coal terminal, one speaker cited a study by the Seattle firm of real estate experts and consultants, The Eastman Company. (The study can be found at the Internet website below\*.) An experienced appraiser with the firm studied the potential impact of dramatic increases in coal train traffic to and from the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal. The Eastman report said that properties near the railroad tracks would likely experience very significant impacts, including increased traffic congestion, noise, vibration, safety concerns, pollution, and stigma. It said the value of family residential properties within 600 feet of the proposed coal train route in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties could drop by 5% to 20%.

Such negative impacts would not be limited to those counties, or even to Washington state, but would affect homes, businesses and other properties all along the 1,000+ miles of BNSF tracks reaching from the Powder River Basin to Cherry Point. They could have a devastating impact, not only on the financial status of thousands of home owners, and on the prospects of businesses located near the tracks, particularly those such as hotels, restaurants, and leisure facilities dependent on customer comfort and satisfaction, but also on the property tax revenues of all those communities. And those communities will not benefit one cent from any jobs or tax income generated by the coal terminal at Cherry Point.

Please consider the cumulative impact of such a loss in property values, and thus in property tax revenues, over time and along the entire railroad corridor.

With appreciation.

\* <http://climatesolutions.onenw.org/nw-states/coal-train-study>

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:08:50 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

As a resident of Whatcom County, I am deeply worried about the potentially extremely serious adverse effects on our community, on the state of Washington, on the entire U.S.A., and in fact on the entire planet, of the construction of a coal export terminal at Cherry Point. This proposal to transport strip-mined coal from Montana and Wyoming on trains and through the Northwest would greatly increase congestion and noise with more coal train traffic, pollute our air and local waterways, harm existing businesses, delay emergency responders, damage aquatic ecosystems and fishing grounds at the terminal site, dangerously increase tanker traffic and the potential for serious shipping accidents, and contribute heavily to accelerating climate change. I urge you to consider these impacts in the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement.

Since many of these effects could cause or aggravate serious health problems, I strongly urge the Co-lead Agencies to insist that a highly qualified outside organization conduct a thorough HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT of the potential impacts of the Cherry Point terminal's construction and continuing operation, specifically including the requisite quantum increase in coal train traffic.

There are five coal export proposals pending which would involve the transport of as much as 150 million tons of coal through the Northwest and through the fragile ecosystems of the coastal waters of the Pacific Northwest. I strongly urge the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct an area-wide Environmental Impact Statement to assess the CUMULATIVE IMPACT of these proposals.

With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@communitywisebellingham.org)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:04:30 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I am a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside the Bellingham city limits. I understand that one of Bellingham's most popular attractions for first-time visitors to our city is Boulevard Park and the adjacent scenic boardwalk connecting to the Taylor Street Dock. They offer incredible views of Bellingham Bay, the San Juan Islands, the Fairhaven waterfront and the city's central business district and skyline.

Boulevard Park is also immediately adjacent to the single BNSF railroad track along which coal trains now travel daily to Canada, along with other freight and passenger trains. SSA and BNSF have so far declined (or actually refused) to explain how the 48 million annual metric tons of coal the Cherry Point terminal hopes to ship to Asia would be transported from the Powder River Basin to Cherry Point, and in particular, how the coal trains would manage to travel along the single-track section of the BNSF tracks between Bow and Ferndale.

On May 7, 2012, CommunityWise Bellingham presented to the Bellingham City Council an authoritative study which suggested that construction of the Cherry Point terminal would require creation of a BNSF railroad siding in south Bellingham which would bar vehicle and convenient pedestrian access to Boulevard Park. (The study is at the Internet website shown below\*.) The siding would leave no space for parking at Boulevard Park, even if a vehicle overpass were constructed, and would require pedestrians to use a stairwell or (nonexistent) elevator to cross over the RR tracks and descend to the park's level. Such a transformation of the park would have a devastating effect on the quality of life of this wonderful city, and would doubtless do serious damage to the tourist business as well.

Please ensure that the EIS determines how SSA and BNSF will resolve the fundamental issue of what RR routes they will use to transport the coal to Cherry Point. Please determine specifically whether that plan will require a new siding which will isolate Boulevard Park, and how SSA claims it will be able to mitigate this extremely serious -- and unmitigatable -- adverse impact.

With appreciation.

\* <http://www.communitywisebellingham.org/cwb-studies-gpt-train-impacts-on-the-waterfront/>

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:00:10 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I live within 100 feet of the BNSF rail line on which up to 18 additional daily coal trains would run to and from the export terminal in our county. I request that the EIS encompass the entire 1,000+ miles of the transportation corridor from the Powder River Basin to Cherry Point, so that all communities along the rail route are given due consideration. Please conduct transparent, thorough and comprehensive studies of the following topics in particular:

**NOISE:** How will the noise and vibrations of these 1.5-mile-long trains passing 18 times a day impact property values and the structural integrity of homes and other buildings close to the tracks? How will they affect the productivity of dairy cows near the tracks? How will the continual noise exposure affect the health and quality of life of people living, working, studying in school, and/or playing or using recreational spaces near the tracks?

**TRAFFIC PROBLEMS:** How will the trains affect motor vehicle traffic (including access to ferry docks), commercial and agricultural transportation, emergency vehicle response times, and the everyday conduct of commerce and industry along the railroad corridor?

**FISHERIES AND MARINE RESOURCES:** What will be the effect of the terminal's construction and operation, and the annual transits of nearly 1,000 gigantic coal carrying vessels, on local tourism; recreational and occupational boating; salmon, crab and herring fisheries; orca whales; the chances of a cataclysmic oil or coal spill; and the general beauty, vitality, livability, and survivability of the Salish Sea and its pristine environs?

**HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:** How will the air and water pollution associated with coal transport and export affect the incidence of cancer, heart disease, asthma, and other health problems? How will the quantum increase in rail and ship traffic serving the Cherry Point terminal affect accident, derailing and collision rates? Mercury pollution traceable to coal-burning facilities in China has already been found in Lake Whatcom, source of Bellingham's drinking water, and other toxic pollutants are very likely to follow the same course across the Pacific Ocean; what are the likely local public health impacts of exporting U.S. coal through our county to be burned in Asia?

**COST TO TAXPAYERS:** How much will we taxpayers have to pay for unreimbursed costs associated with a Cherry Point terminal's construction and operation, specifically with the coal's transport and export? Will it be SSA, BNSF, Peabody Energy, or the local, state and federal taxpayers who will pay for direct and indirect costs such as necessary upgrades and additions to the railroad infrastructure; safety measures; public health expenses; construction of overpasses, underpasses, and other attempts to mitigate serious adverse impacts; losses suffered by local businesses and local workers who lose their jobs; damaged tourist trade; and plummeting property values?

Please include a careful and thorough study of these threatening impacts in the project's EIS. With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](#)  
**To:** [Perry, Randel J NWS](#)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Monday, January 14, 2013 10:06:21 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Washington Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I am deeply concerned and very afraid about the stability and integrity of the land under our home, and the homes of all our neighbors here in Bellingham, Whatcom County, and all the homes in the states of Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho which are situated on high ground near the railroad tracks that would carry tens of millions of tons of coal each year if this proposal is permitted. With a small increase in coal train traffic over the past three years, we now notice daily that our home vibrates with the passing of each incredibly heavy coal train. We are very much afraid that the integrity of the land here and along other steep embankments throughout the RR transportation network from Wyoming and Montana to Cherry Point will give way if the proposed terminal is permitted, and the frequency, weight and length of trains increases dramatically. Please include in the scope of the EIS the effect the coal trains will have on the embankments, slopes, rock faces, clay earth, bridges, roads, lanes, residential lots, nature reserves, parks, and schools in the towns and cities along the proposed transportation corridor.

In the past year, the home of a neighbor several doors away from us started to slide down the embankment toward the RR tracks. Another neighbor's home was damaged when a train plowed through the earth, rock and debris which had fallen on the tracks after an embankment next-door gave way and a deck collapsed. Other neighbors who were trying to sell their home failed to do so when the prospective buyer pulled out of the sale the day after the Gateway Pacific Terminal project was announced. Even the mere prospect of the terminal's construction has thus become quite a burden to bear. Please include in the scope of the EIS the economic effect the GPT proposal would have on real estate values (and thus on property tax revenues) in the vicinity of the RR routes all the way from the Powder River Basin to Cherry Point.

In addition please consider the effects vibrations caused by mammoth coal trains will have on the Whatcom County dairy industry. If I am feeling anxious and fearful from the current vibrations of our home caused by coal trains, I expect our dairy cows are upset by the vibrations as well. In fact, a study at the following URL links cows' lower milk yields to such vibrations:  
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/dairy/facts/vibrations.htm>  
Since this area has such a strong dairy industry, please include in the EIS the likely economic loss to that dairy industry if the GPT proposal is permitted.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:52:55 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I am a resident of Whatcom County, living on Chuckanut Drive, about one mile south of the Bellingham city limits. The BNSF railroad tracks run across our property, but our concern for the negative impacts of the proposed coal export terminal at Cherry Point extend far beyond our own small property. We are deeply worried about the impact of a quantum increase in coal train traffic on the entire railroad network in the Pacific Northwest, particularly because several other coal export terminals are also being proposed in Washington and Oregon.

The data in two recent documents on rail capacity and rail freight call out for a comprehensive review of the impacts of coal trains in Washington and Oregon. Both documents offer useful information, but each examines only some of the impacts that can be expected if the proposed coal terminals are built in Washington and Oregon. They, and numerous other studies and articles, some of which can be found at the URL below\*, show how incompletely we know or understand the probable consequences of delivering Powder River Basin coal to Northwest terminals for export to Asian markets.

\* <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/transpo/coaltrans.aspx>

The first document, Pacific Northwest Marine Cargo Forecast Update and Rail Capacity Assessment: Final Report (December 2011) prepared by BST Associates and Main Line Management, forecasts a steady growth in all forms of freight train traffic through 2030. These estimates include liquid, dry bulk, and container trains. The estimate for coal train lengths of 115 to 120 cars is inconsistent with GPT's plan for trains 150 cars long. This, however, is a relatively minor difference. What is not minor is the assertion that most of the rail corridors can accommodate the projected growth. Some of the projections are based on 2008 data and some on 2010 data. All were made before the announcement of the plan to build six coal terminals in Washington and Oregon. The study alludes to the possibility of such ports, but does not appear to include any data from the various proposals.

Although rail capacities are assessed based on future rail expansion, nowhere does the report indicate the cost to the public for these improvements. In fact, it leaves open the assumption that, because the railroads (Burlington Northern and Union Pacific) will determine what improvements are needed, these costs will be carried by the railroads themselves and not the public. We know that that is not at all likely to be the reality.

Finally, the report does show that the rail corridor from Everett to Vancouver, B.C., is directly affected by the GPT proposal. That is, "the growth in bulk export commodities may lead to sustained capacity constraints along this segment" (p. 35). The document provides a graph that illustrates this capacity problem through the year 2030. Also, the section of rail below Everett grows substantially. For example, the number of trains from Auburn to Seattle, part of the Powder River Basin coal route, grows to 103 trains per day by 2020.

The second report, Heavy Traffic Ahead: Rail Impacts of Powder River Basin Coal to Asia by Way of Pacific Northwest Terminals (July 2012), prepared by the Western Organization of Resource Councils, provides cost estimates and revenue values to the various commodities shipped by rail throughout the Pacific Northwest. The estimated cost of rail improvements "could well exceed \$5 billion" (p.49). It also reports that the railroad revenue in 2010 for shipping a wide range of agricultural products was \$1,574,925,482 (p. 43).

Neither report identifies the cumulative value of the all the products shipped by rail though the Northwest, either for domestic use or for export. Moreover, neither estimates the altered value of these goods if they have to compete for scarcer railroad resources in order to deliver product to market in a

timely manner or by contractually obligated dates. While each report contains valuable information, there is not to my knowledge a detailed and cumulative assessment of what the costs would be to the greater public (that is agricultural interests, regional industries, the taxpayer, etc.) if coal were shipped to the various proposed ports in Washington and Oregon.

The coal terminal at Cherry Point is only one of five proposed for the Northwest. In other words, it is only part of a proposal. It directly affects, and is also directly affected by, the other proposed terminals in Washington and Oregon. Because Cherry Point is part of a greater economy, I think it only fair and reasonable that a detailed and comprehensive study be made of the cumulative impacts of coal train traffic on all the communities and industries of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon that are affected by one or more of the proposed terminals. Therefore, I am specifically asking that the scope of the EIS for the coal terminal proposed for Cherry Point include a comprehensive economic and social analysis of the railroad impacts on the Northwest as if all of the proposed terminals were to be approved.

With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:50:11 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

As a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside the Bellingham city limits, I am deeply concerned about the potentially very serious adverse effects of the construction and operation of a coal export terminal at Cherry Point.

There are scores of significant adverse impacts which this project would produce, this comment is about the GPT Permit Application's Purpose and Need. There is reason to believe that some of the information provided in this section of the Permit Application is either:

- 1) Not factually true, or
- 2) Somewhat factually true, but misleading as to whether the result will in fact be a net benefit to the public interest.

In the discussion below, the relevant sections of the Permit application are quoted and are in square brackets ["like this"].

["operate a multimodal marine terminal .... multiple dry bulk commodities"]

-- What's questionable is the word "multimodal." At present, the only material for which construction is planned is coal. Most of the structures built to support coal export are expressly not usable for other goods as long as the coal terminal is in operation, and other goods such as food-grade products may be precluded from export in the vicinity of a coal terminal. I recommend that all references to "multimodal," or to multiple commodities, be updated to refer explicitly and solely to the materials actively planned to be exported through the terminal -- at present, only coal.

["to meet international and domestic demand"]

-- This is not only inaccurate, but ludicrous, since there is no plan to export items to meet domestic demand. Doing that would be quite a trick.

["Gateway Pacific Terminal would further advance the ... environmental protection goals of the WDNR-designated Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve."]

-- This is inaccurate. Installing a coal terminal at the location could not possibly advance environmental protection goals, especially in comparison to the current situation of no development. In fact, the statement is stunning in its audacity; it is a bald-faced lie. In addition to correcting this section of the Purpose and Need, please reflect also for a moment on what this says about the credibility of the applicant with respect to being truthful.

["Gateway Pacific Terminal would further advance the economic development ... goals of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan's Cherry Point Industrial UGA ..."]

-- This is questionable. I request that the agencies consider whether development of a coal export terminal precludes the most effective development of the site, using key measures such as total economic value creation and jobs per acre. For instance, the presence of coal dust emissions from the coal piles could stop further development of the very substantial acreage on the property that is not planned for terminal development.

["The need to ship bulk cargo to and from Asia and other markets to meet current and future market demand;"]

-- This is questionable, both in its accuracy and in the desirability of the result. In a world that is rapidly becoming constrained with respect to acceptable carbon emissions and other limits, it is rational to expect that the quantities of low-value bulk cargo to be shipped across large oceans should go down in quantity, not up, if proper decisions are being made. In fact, the building of structures that are specifically designed to facilitate vast increases in trans-oceanic shipments should be regarded as very

poor policy. Instead, our best future development should concentrate on high value goods, which, if they are shipped overseas, return the highest achievable value per ton shipped. Broadly, such goods should be those that are valued in dollars per pound, rather than dollars per ton.

["The need for deep-water, bulk marine terminals in the Puget Sound region"]

-- This is extremely questionable with respect to desirability. Deep-water, bulk terminals necessarily cause traffic in extremely large ships. The Puget Sound area is already at or beyond capacity to handle traffic in such large ships in a safe manner. Puget Sound does not need more deep-water bulk marine terminals. If such terminals are needed in Washington State, which is doubtful, then they should at least be sited with direct access to open ocean.

["The need for community and economic development in Whatcom County"]

-- This is extremely questionable. The agencies should evaluate the NET economic development effects of the coal terminal (jobs created vs. jobs lost or jeopardized, tax revenues added vs. tax revenues lost, etc.), including but not limited to a careful examination of the professional reports on this and related topics commissioned by CommunityWise Bellingham. It should also be noted that the private sector in Whatcom County added over 2,400 jobs in 2012, more than ten times the projected direct employment of the terminal when operating at full capacity.

["existing and future market demands ... current and forecasted Pacific Rim demand ... Forecasted growth in trade ... "]

-- Considering that the only material currently planned and contracted for export is coal, the reference to future market demands is deeply troubling, because it reveals that the purpose of the coal terminal is to supply further expansion in the use of coal in Asia. Let's put this very directly: The expansion in the use of coal in Asia is a serious threat to the United States, and indeed to the entire planet, through worsened climate change. There is no circumstance under which we should actively participate in facilitating this harmful activity, which is bad climate policy and aggravates an existing major national security risk.

["Because of their physical nature (large quantities of voluminous, dry materials), dry bulk commodities are shipped in bulk rather than as containerized cargo"]

-- This is a good illustration of one of the reasons why coal and similar materials are not desirable for export development. They are so stunningly low in value per ton or per cubic yard that they require the largest ships on the planet in order to ship any appreciable value.

["In 2008, the average size of bulk carriers had increased 11 percent over the previous 5 years. This increase reflects the deployment of Capesize vessels into the international bulk carrier fleet."]

-- This represents a PROBLEM, rather than a fun and exciting new trend to follow. As noted above, the state of Washington will realize far more value by exporting premium products, whose value is measured in dollars per pound. Such goods will not be compatible with shipment in bulk carriers.

["the need for multimodal, deep-water bulk marine terminals is not being met in the Pacific Northwest region"]

-- Oh really? Let's see the study. In such a study, listing of demand for coal exports should be excluded, unless the applicant is willing to surrender the imaginary "multi-commodity" label for the proposed port. If this purported demand is composed of demand for coal, the applicant should come clean, to the extent possible to anyone in the coal business, and acknowledge the entire real purpose of the facility, which is to export coal.

["The proposed project would help to implement ... the Governor's 6-Point Export Plan (Office of the Governor 2010)."]

-- That's questionable. Please carefully evaluate the Governor's plan and determine whether a plan for WASHINGTON exports includes development of export of NON-WASHINGTON materials. Also, please evaluate whether the quantum increase in coal train traffic through Washington state necessary to meet the GPT demand (and perhaps that of four or five other proposed coal export terminals in Washington and Oregon) would jeopardize continued steady growth in production and exports of genuine Washington state products, such as apples, berries, and other agricultural products which move to market by train.

["The Terminal is consistent with the goals of the WDNR's Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve designation for

the area and with the Reserve's Management Plan (WDNR 2010), which specifically allows this proposed development."]

-- This is questionable. These plans do include potential provision for a port. However, the scale of the proposed port at 48 million metric tons per year is vastly greater than anything that has previously been contemplated. In 2010, the year most recently cited, the active permit for the site envisioned a port with less than 10 million tons per year capacity, so it is reasonable to assume that the management plan was consistent with that scale of activity. In order for these plans to be cited in support of the proposed terminal, each plan should be reopened and evaluated specifically to consider export of the commodity of coal at a scale of 48 million metric tons per year.

["The site must also possess unique features and characteristics"]

-- This section makes no mention of the constrained nature of the waters between the proposed terminal and the open ocean. The rather bland statement that such a site "Is located on the West Coast of the US" conjures up an image of having a ready interface with open ocean, but this is very simply not accurate.

Broadly, with respect to Purpose and Need, I ask the agencies to consider what types of major infrastructure investments are appropriate for a future whose outlines include:

- Critically important reductions of carbon pollution emissions worldwide,
- The impacts of climate change and ocean acidification, which are already occurring, and
- The critical importance of premium, high-value products to our economy, now and in the future.

I ask that the agencies develop information in the EIS that will help the staff of various agencies to make sound, forward-looking decisions, which do not contribute to aggravating serious climate and ocean problems that are already occurring, and which help us to continue to set a course toward a healthy future for our county, state, country, and planet.

With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eiscgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eiscgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eiscgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:46:02 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

As a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside the Bellingham city limits, I am deeply concerned about the potentially devastating adverse effects on our community, our state, our nation, and in fact the entire planet, of the construction and operation of a coal export terminal in our community. The most compelling of these concerns is the fact that, by facilitating the burning of tens of millions of tons of coal per year, we would be accelerating cataclysmic climate change tantamount to global suicide.

President Obama, in his second inaugural address, made the following statement:

"We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires, and crippling drought, and more powerful storms. The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult. But Americans cannot resist this transition. We must lead it."

I ask that the EIS include consideration of the deadly serious impact which operation of the coal terminal proposed for Cherry Point would have on the entire planet, directly and indirectly. The public servants in whose hands the fate of this project will lie must consider whether this direct contradiction of the president's stated goal, and of our own national interest, will in fact "betray our children and future generations." Remember that the Pentagon has stated that climate change is the single greatest threat to our national security. Public officials have a mandate to act in the public and national interest, not simply to approve virtually every development project which corporate America brings to the table.

As James Wells, one of the best thinkers and hardest workers among the many articulate critics of the coal terminal, has written\*...

Some decisions are truly a one way street. Once a path is chosen, it won't be rolled back. We have in front of us a decision on whether to double down on a massive new climate-destroying coal project.

It's shocking that, instead of discussing how to roll back coal mining combustion [as Washington state has recently done by voting to phase out its last coal-burning power plants], we are facing the prospect of a huge expansion of it. It's in the same category, both in scale and sheer boneheaded, mind-blowing wrongness, as the Keystone XL pipeline.

Long after the coal terminal is abandoned, or reduced to three lonely guys in the control room, these places will be dead. For as long as we live, and for the entire lifetime of anyone we ever meet, we will be dealing with the harsh climate legacy of ill-conceived projects like this, desperate efforts to get one more fix instead of checking into detox....

I request that the agencies should thoughtfully incorporate the key concept of Permanence, while evaluating the various adverse impacts which have been described in the scoping public comments that have been submitted.

For many of the impacted resources, the occurrence of an impact is truly a one way street, from which there is no recovery within our lifetimes. This is most obvious in the case of big ticket impacts such as the potential for a major oil spill due to vessel collision, or the effects of coal combustion on global warming and ocean acidification. But, it is also true with respect to more local impacts -- if a person does not get to the hospital in time due to a blocked crossing, it doesn't get any more permanent than that.

It is especially important to highlight this concept in the context of a world, and a country, with limited resources. In much of our history as a country, we have been able to throw aside concerns about permanence of impacts, because there was always a new frontier to move to. Now, there is no new frontier, and suddenly we become aware, or should become aware, that a given resource on a given piece of land or sea is literally beyond price.

Conventional economic analysis still disregards this important concept, so it should be carefully incorporated into the EIS. For example, the conventional concept of property ownership and property value contains a gross distortion of the true value of a property. If you look strictly at dollars, then it would be a winning proposition for a company to buy a property for X dollars, realize some net gain of X/5 dollars for 10 years, and then walk away, even if the property was permanently impaired from being used ever again in the future for any purpose.

This fact led to the enactment of key environmental laws including SEPA and NEPA, but those laws in turn have led to the creation of an entire business sector devoted to dodging the trailing responsibilities for impacts that have been created.

So when we say that Pacific International Terminals (PIT) "owns" the property, we should properly understand that this ownership, and potential use of the property, is entirely conditional on PIT assuring that its operations result in no permanent impacts, both on the subject property and on neighboring land, sea, and air. For any proposed use of the property, that assurance must be provided in a form that proactively prevents impacts, rather than just responding to them.

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY NO WAY THAT A PROPOSED COAL PORT CAN OPERATE IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH WHAT IS NEEDED. [ALL CAPS emphasis mine.] Not only are there too many moving parts, such as hundreds of large ocean-going vessels per year, but the end purpose of the port, to supply 48 million metric tons per year of coal to be burned, is in direct conflict with rational planning for our climate.

The reality of permanence ultimately trumps anything that we may say or do to mitigate or contain such impacts. When the Deepwater Horizon exploded, BP had binders full of response plans that didn't do much good. When we imagine that we can "enforce" compliance by levying fines for a spill, let's realize that such fines don't compensate the marine life that has been killed, and don't even begin to address the legacy of those damaged resources for our children and future generations.

When evaluating the impacts of the Gateway Pacific Terminal, please thoughtfully consider Permanence as part of the EIS process.

Please bear in mind that...

Anytime you think that you don't have a choice, you actually do.

Anytime you think you have to do something that's wrong, you don't.

Not Here. Not Today. Not Any More.

Our future is worth saving.

Let us not participate in our own destruction.

With gratitude.

\* <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/01/20/1180661/-Permanence>

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eiscgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eiscgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eiscgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:43:20 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

As a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside the Bellingham city limits, I am deeply worried about the potentially devastating and lasting negative effects on our community, our state, our nation, and in fact the entire planet, of the construction and operation of a coal export terminal at Cherry Point. The most compelling of these concerns is the fact that, by facilitating the burning of tens of millions of tons of coal per year, we would be accelerating cataclysmic climate change tantamount to global suicide.

One of the concerned and active citizens in our community about the proposal to build a coal export terminal in Whatcom County is Mr. James Wells of Bellingham. In his own scoping comment, which follows below, Mr. Wells addresses the thorny issue that, while NEPA and SEPA clearly require consideration of the greenhouse gas (GHG) contribution of a proposal -- in this case, the Cherry Point terminal itself -- it is difficult to get regulators to consider the GHG contributions of related activities which are more geographically remote. In the case at hand, the exported coal will be burned in Asia. We all know what that will mean for GHG contributions (and for adverse impacts such as increased mercury deposits into our own water source, Lake Whatcom), but terminal proponents have long argued against scoping such impacts, claiming that China will burn someone's coal, if not that exported through Cherry Point.

I ask that the EIS process favorably consider Mr. Wells' clear and compelling counterarguments, which are spelled out in detail below, and include in the EIS the adverse impacts of China's burning of the coal shipped through Cherry Point. As Mr. Wells explains, given our local and national policies regarding GHGs and global climate change, it is simply and irrefutably against those public policies to refuse to consider the end use of a product which is the purpose of the proposed activity, when that product is coal.

This issue affects future generations around the world, and I implore you to consider your responsibilities as stewards of the Public Interest in your decisions about the EIS and about this proposal.

With gratitude.

- - -

Mr. Wells' comment:

I request that the agencies should consider Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other pollutant emissions from the coal at its point of combustion in Asia.

The plan is to export over 48 million metric tons of coal per year to China, where it will be burned, resulting in air pollution that will cause impacts in the United States (in addition to the effects on nearby populations in China). The pollution includes carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a greenhouse gas that also causes ocean acidification. [The combustion also releases harmful pollutants such as mercury, but this comment is focused on CO<sub>2</sub>]

In public discourse, we have repeatedly heard a defeatist and misleading suggestion that people in China will just acquire coal from elsewhere, dug out of mines that do not currently exist, and burn that coal instead, if we do not export coal to them. That may or may not occur. If it does, that other coal will cost them more than importing coal from the USA, and thus they would probably use less. But in all cases it's never morally acceptable to be part of something harmful on the theory that someone else, somewhere else, is going to do it anyway.

Broadly, in permitting activities, agencies are required to evaluate an activity for the entirety of what

it is, not as compared to some imaginary other circumstance that may or may not occur. This particular coal, if shipped to Asia to be burned, will create the pollutants. If not, then those pollutant emissions will not occur at that place and time. Therefore the full effects should be considered.

One regulatory question is whether the applicable law allows for consideration of an effect that may occur outside the US. The clear answer: Yes it can. It's right in the applicable SEPA law:

[A] lead agency shall not limit its consideration of a proposal's impacts only to those aspects within its jurisdiction, including local or state boundaries. (Wash. Admin. Code sec. 197-11-060(4)(b))

Next: Can the impact of combustion emissions, including carbon dioxide emissions, be considered?

Again, Yes. The United States EPA has recognized the materials emitted from combustion, including Carbon Dioxide, as pollutants that threaten human health and the environment.

At play is the combination: Considering combustion emissions, including carbon dioxide, that originate overseas.

A key consideration is the concept of the Public Interest. The agencies should broadly consider the public interest in this case, because the project needs to use government resources rather than just private assets. The effect of greenhouse gas emissions is relevant to public interest, because global warming and ocean acidification represent a very serious threat to our environment and the livability of our planet.

In the case of GPT, there are at least three major government-controlled resources that are required for the project to go forward:

- The pier requires a shoreline lease from the WA State Department of Ecology
- The coal is mined from federal government land in Montana and Wyoming
- Large water withdrawals from the Nooksack River are needed for dust control and other purposes

This request to use government resources is profoundly different from meeting regulatory requirements for an activity on private land. The applicants have no title to the government resources, and so for access to be granted, the proposed activity needs to be in the public interest. This is especially applicable to the waters of the state due to the Public Trust Doctrine, as explained on the WA Department of Ecology web site:

"The essence of the [Public Trust] doctrine is that the waters of the state are a public resource owned by and available to all citizens equally for the purposes of navigation, conducting commerce, fishing, recreation and similar uses and that this trust is not invalidated by private ownership of the underlying land."

In another example, leases to mine coal from public lands have been granted on the basis that the coal will provide a stable domestic energy supply. The current practice of shipping coal from federal lands to British Columbia for export to Asia is in conflict with the justification for the coal leases, and a massive expansion of such export would also be. No export terminal should be permitted prior to conducting a complete review of the basis for the lease to mine the subject coal, and coal whose lease was justified on the theory of providing for domestic energy supplies should not be allowed to be exported.

The GPT project will also require exercise of a key government power, which is: Eminent Domain. This means seizing land from other private owners, whether or not they want to sell, in order to allow the project to occur. This is another point whether the question of the Public Interest is applicable.

The project is also inconsistent with certain federal or state laws or policies.

- Copenhagen Accord

The United States is a signatory to the Copenhagen climate accord, which agrees in concept to large reductions in GHG emissions worldwide. Large new coal export schemes are clearly inconsistent with the intent of the document.

- EPA has recognized CO<sub>2</sub> as a Pollutant

The US EPA has declared carbon dioxide to be a pollutant, and has started to regulate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) state that any new coal-fired power plant in the US must meet a very tight standard for low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. If we build a new export terminal for the purpose of supplying coal to be burned in a manner that does not meet these new standards, then that undermines the entire purpose of the NSPS standards.

EPA has also commented on a different coal export proposal that resulting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be considered.

- WA State GHG Reduction Standards

Washington State adopted greenhouse gas reduction standards via legislation adopted in 2008. See RCW 70.235.070(1)(a). The statute establishes that by 2020, emissions shall be reduced to 1990 levels. By 2035, GHG emissions are to be 25 percent below 1990 levels and by 2050, they are to be 50 percent below 1990 levels. The coal terminal, if permitted, would emit tens of millions of metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, wiping out all of those reductions, and more. Since CO<sub>2</sub> is a global pollutant, it would be

futile to reduce local emissions while facilitating an increase elsewhere. [For reference, all GHG emissions in all of WA state are about 100 million metric tons / year]

- WA State Panel on Ocean Acidification

In November of 2012, the Governor of Washington State released an executive order initiating action on ocean acidification. The executive order states, in part:

I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the state of Washington ... do, effective immediately, hereby order and direct: ... The Office of the Governor and the cabinet agencies that report to the Governor to advocate for reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide at a global, national, and regional level.

- SEPA Standards

The SEPA standard itself recognizes the world-wide scope of environmental issues.

SEPA considers "each person's" right to a "healthful environment" to be "fundamental and inalienable," (Rev. Code Wash. Sec. 43.21C.020(3)), "[r]ecognize[s] the worldwide and long-range character of environmental problems," and directs agencies, "where consistent with state policy, [to] lend appropriate support to initiatives, resolutions, and programs designed to maximize international cooperation in anticipating and preventing a decline in the quality of the world environment..." (RCW 43.21C.030(1)(f)).

For additional information, please see this article:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/01/05/1176405/-Don-t-Pee-In-The-Pool>

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:37:33 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

As a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside the Bellingham city limits, I am deeply worried about the serious negative effects on our community of the construction and operation of a coal export terminal at Cherry Point. I have been aware of, and worried about, many of these adverse impacts since shortly after the project was announced nearly two years ago.

Now I see that the vast number of adverse health and safety impacts of such a project have been exhaustively and authoritatively addressed in the 24-page scoping comment submitted by the more than 180 local physicians who are members of Whatcom Docs. These dedicated health professionals have carefully documented their very specific concerns about numerous such negative impacts in the following categories:

- Diesel particulate matter
- Coal dust
- Noise exposure
- Delays in emergency responses

I agree with their concerns, and ask that the EIS respond to each of the specific questions raised in the Whatcom Docs' scoping comment (attached). I also agree with the request of Whatcom Docs, as well as physicians in Skagit County and King County, that the EIS process include a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to encompass not only Whatcom County, but the entire rail and shipping corridor from the Powder River Basin to and through the coal carriers' routes to the Pacific Ocean. This HIA, like the EIS itself, should cover all the coal export terminal proposals currently under consideration in the Pacific Northwest.

This issue affects our children, grandchildren and their children for generations to come. I implore you to consider your moral and humane responsibilities as leading citizens when making decisions about the public interest in planning the EIS about this proposal.

With thanks.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@whatcomcountywa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:31:22 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

As a resident of Whatcom County I am deeply worried about the serious, negative effects on our community of the construction of a coal export terminal in our county. I have been concerned and fearful of these negative impacts since the project was announced nearly two years ago. I was quite surprised, however, to learn rather recently about the issue of the expected demand the proposed coal terminal would impose on the local area's water resources.

The terminal proponents' Project Information Document (PID) states that the terminal would require an average of 5.3 million gallons of water each day from the Public Utility District (PUD) for purposes such as dampening its 80-acre pile of coal to suppress dust and combustion. I understand all that water will come from the Nooksack River. That is more water than the city of Ferndale uses every day, and half the amount the entire city of Bellingham uses for residential, commercial and industrial customers combined. The PID says the terminal will naturally use less water during rainy periods, and more in the dry months. Unfortunately, it is precisely during those summer dry months when the Nooksack River experiences its lowest flows. And according to a Western Washington University professor's master's thesis published in 2010\*, the effects of global climate change may in the future reduce that Nooksack summer flow by over 8%. And in the warm summer months, much of that dust suppression water flow will evaporate, so that none of it can be recycled.

\* <http://kula.geol.wvu.edu/rjmitch/Dickerson.pdf>.

It has been said that the next world war will be over water supplies. While we in the Pacific Northwest are currently blessed by sufficient supplies of clean water, but that water supply is not unlimited. Other Washington counties are already facing challenges, and even Ferndale is encountering problems with its own water supply. We must be extremely careful to safeguard the sources, and uses, of our valuable water.

GPT's huge demand for water depends on our region's best water source. In the worst case scenario of a record-breaking drought -- such as much of the U.S.A. has experienced in recent years -- GPT's demand could have a seriously adverse impact on Whatcom County's residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and recreational consumers of safe water. For this reason, I ask that the GPT EIS study future water demands in this region, based on changing climate scenarios, and analyze the overall impact GPT's demand for water would have on the local water distribution system over the proposed life of the terminal. Some specific questions:

-- During warm and dry summer months, how much is evaporation likely to increase GPT's daily demand for water? Would GPT have to build a huge reservoir to store water in rainy months to use in the summer? If so, would that require a new Permit Application, or separate permit?

-- In the no-long-unimaginable event of a severe water shortage, would GPT's needs for its dust and combustion suppression system have a higher priority for water supply than local homes, farmers, or businesses? Who would make such determinations, and how?

-- What are the Lummi and other native American communities' rights to the Nooksack's waters? Do they have a say in how much of the Nooksack's precious waters GPT should be able to claim?

With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096



**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:26:51 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I am a resident of Whatcom County, living on Chuckanut Drive, just south of the Bellingham city limits. The BNSF railroad tracks run across our property, which sits on a high embankment overlooking Chuckanut Bay. Our home is perhaps 25 meters east of the tracks, and perhaps 10-15 meters above them; the tracks, in turn, are perhaps 10 meters above the immediately adjacent water's level. Some of the dozen or more trains which typically pass our home daily already shake our foundation; we feel them as much as hear them.

I am quite fearful about the impact which the additional long and heavy coal train traffic necessary to serve the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) could have on the stability and integrity of our property and home, and of the properties and structures on similar high ground all along the 1,000+ miles of BNSF's rail corridor between the Powder River Basin and Cherry Point. The GPT proposal foresees 18 additional coal trains daily, each 1.5 miles long. That is half again as long as any trains running through Bellingham today. Half of those trains would be fully loaded with coal, and thus substantially heavier than any trains running on this route today.

On November 4, 2011, an environmental planner with the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) confirmed to me in a phone conversation that many homes along Bellingham's Eldridge Avenue, on the bluff above the BNSF tracks, are in a seriously bad position. He said the homeowners have been very anxious for some time, and have voice their concerns to City Hall and other authorities. He said there is a lot of movement in the soil in that area now, causing foundations to crack, windows to break, etc. (I had heard other reports that the foundations of some of those homes had moved by as much as one foot.) He added that, contrary to what one might expect, when trains idle on a siding, as they increasingly do now below Eldridge because of single-track bottlenecks, and then start up again, the series of shocks as each car is suddenly jerked into motion can actually cause worse vibrations than when trains simply moving by at speed, and send huge shock waves up the bluff. Finally, he said thought was being given to doing a follow-up study to one conducted in the early 1990s by BNSF, the City of Bellingham, and the Eldridge Homeowners Association to examine the frequency and strength of current vibrations from the railroad traffic.

The DOE posts "Slope Stability Maps" on its website. The maps for Whatcom County are linked to the website shown below\*. Three of these maps are attached:

- The first shows that most of the bluffs along and northwest of Eldridge Avenue are Unstable or Intermediate, and that several sections are marked "Unstable Recent Slide."
- The second and third show that significant portions of the Chuckanut and Edgemoor shorelines are also Unstable or Intermediate, including our property just opposite Chuckanut Rock.

\* <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/femaweb/whatcom.htm>

These issues of stability or integrity of high ground along the BNSF railroad corridor between Cherry Point and the Powder River Basin are of critical importance not only to our neighbors in the Chuckanut, Edgemoor and Eldridge Avenue areas, but also to every resident or property owner on high ground all along that corridor. Mitigating a threat to such property from the vibrations caused by longer, heavier and much more frequent coal trains, if it is even possible, would seem to be extremely costly.

Because this issue could involve a devastating impact to hundreds or thousands of property owners along the BNSF railroad tracks, potentially costing them thousands or tens of thousands of dollars, I ask that the GPT EIS include an analysis of the likely impact on the stability and integrity of elevated properties along the BNSF corridor of the vibrations caused by 18 additional mile-and-a-half-long coal trains passing by those properties every day.

With gratitude.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@communitywisebellingham.org)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 4:22:32 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

I am a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside the Bellingham city line. Proponents of the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) claim that the major (if not only) advantages it will bring to the local economy will be the number of jobs it creates here and the tax revenue it will generate for local governments. GPT claims their project will create lots of new jobs for our county. They have not, however, addressed the number of jobs that might be lost locally, or not attracted to the area, if the coal terminal were built. A more thorough study commissioned by CommunityWise Bellingham\* found that the GPT "could put other economic growth at risk, and be a net loss for the local economy."

I would like the EIS to include a thorough and authoritative analysis of the complete economic impact on local economy if the proposed GPT were to go into operation. Specifically, please address the following questions:

- 1) How many permanent, full-time jobs would the GPT create, directly and indirectly?
- 2) How many temporary jobs would be created by the GPT's construction? Where would those workers be likely to come from (i.e., local, or from other areas)? What would be the impact on local housing, traffic, law enforcement, schools, and other public services, of the temporary influx of those workers for perhaps two years, and then the sudden departure of those hired from other areas?
- 3) At least as important, how many jobs -- current and prospective -- would be LOST to the local economy as a result of the many effects of the terminal's operation? These effects would include air, noise and water pollution caused by an additional 18 trains passing daily between the Montana and Wyoming coal fields and the GPT; hindered access to industrial/commercial/retail/recreational sites on the "wrong" side of the railroad tracks; the cancellation of planned development projects because the impact of the quantum increase in railroad traffic makes their sites unattractive; damage to marine resources and vulnerable species of fish which contribute to the employment of thousands of workers in the region's fishing, packing, shipping, and even tourism industries; and a variety of other changes the entire character of the local communities.
- 4) How much revenue would the agriculture sector of Whatcom County's economy lose from the damage to its widespread reputation for high quality organic and other food products attributable to the noise, vibration, and air, water and soil pollution caused by the tremendous increase in railroad traffic through Whatcom farmlands?

With appreciation.

\* <http://www.communitywisebellingham.org/economic-impacts-of-the-gpt-development/>

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096

**From:** [Mary Lee Mooney](mailto:Mary.Lee.Mooney@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**To:** [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)  
**Subject:** Docket number COE-2012-0016: Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal coal export proposal EIS scoping comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013 5:00:14 PM

---

Dear Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County Council:

As a resident of Whatcom County, living just outside the Bellingham city limits, I am concerned about the potentially very serious adverse impacts of the construction and operation of a coal export terminal at Cherry Point. As taxpayers and responsible citizens, my husband and I are naturally very interested in the economic prospects of adjacent Bellingham city, of Whatcom County, of Washington state, and of the entire country. We are particularly concerned about "worst case" scenarios involving the Cherry Point proposal, including the very real possibilities of a vessel collision in the Salish Sea, a coal train derailment, a catastrophic oil or coal spill, or a major fire or explosion, as well as the distinct possibility that Asian coal markets will dry up and the terminal will go bankrupt, as did coal export terminals previously built in Los Angeles and in Portland, Oregon.

It is not comforting that project proponent SSA Marine created a subsidiary, Pacific International Terminals (PIT), which has NO ASSETS, to build and operate the Cherry Point terminal. If some disaster were to occur, asset-less PIT could declare bankruptcy in a flash, and absolve its owners of any financial responsibility for the aftereffects of the disaster. Similarly, if the terminal were to go bankrupt, PIT could also disappear in bankruptcy proceedings, along with its employees' pension benefits (if they even have any). SSA's business partner Peabody Energy tried to offload its employee pension and health benefit obligations to a subsidiary which promptly declared bankruptcy; that attempted fraud is still being fought in court, but we should not open the door to a similar scam involving a coal export terminal.

I ask that the EIS examine what assurances SSA, its parent Carrix, and its subsidiary PIT will provide that the costs of any disaster, bankruptcy, or other such catastrophic event will not be dumped onto the taxpayers of our cities, county and state. SSA and Carrix should guarantee all such obligations of PIT, including union contracts, incident response and cleanup, and site restoration whenever the coal terminal ceases to operate, no matter what the circumstances.

The Cherry Point coal terminal application states that a "site-specific emergency response plan would be developed and kept available at the Terminal at all times. Spill and response measures would be implemented following an emergency or release of dangerous materials... coordinated with ALCOA and BP." We have all seen over and over again, however, the pitiful inadequacy of "emergency response plans" in such situations. The Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster, the BP Gulf Oil spill, Exxon Valdez, Bhopal, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl.... All had a "safety plan," and all failed. After the Exxon Valdez spill, courts ordered Exxon to pay \$4.8 billion in punitive damages for the harm done to Prince William Sound; slick lawyers for Exxon, however, got the bill whittled down to a mere \$504 million, chump change for Exxon.

The EIS should also study whether SSA/Carrix should be required to post a bond to cover the costs of a worst-case cataclysmic disaster, regardless of who is ultimately held responsible for it. If SSA, Peabody Energy, BNSF, and perhaps other players argued over responsibility, they could fight it out in court, but at least the victims of the disaster would be protected by the posted bond. Some have suggested an appropriate bond might be \$500 billion, but even one tenth of that amount might encourage SSA to be serious about safety and environmental protective measures, because once we've let the genie out of the bottle, once we've allowed this magnificent environment to be destroyed during our lifetime, no amount of money is going to be able to undo the harm.

We humans can not bring back species, clean water or air. We must protect what we have.

With appreciation.

Mary Lee Mooney  
1207 Chuckanut Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229  
360-734-2096