

**Southwest County Coalition**

**Environmental Impact Statement  
Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal  
Custer Spur, (CH2MHILL)**

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**To whom it may concern,**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal/ Custer Spur Environmental Impact Statement (GPT/CSEIS). As proposed the project will have severe adverse environmental affects for local communities adjacent to the mines, railroads, shipping terminal, and Puget Sound. The Southwest County Coalition (SWCC) is a diverse alliance of Spokane County families and individuals organized to address public concern. SWCC is committed to bringing to light the concerns of our Southwest County neighbors, family, and friends when the actions, or inaction, of public or private sector individuals adversely affect county residences.

SWCC comments will primarily be focused on the adverse environmental consequences of the proposed action on those living adjacent to, or in the vicinity of the railroad tracks in the Marshall and Cheney communities of Washington State. However, the concerns expressed herein could easily be juxtaposed with any community where the coal trains will pass. In the Marshall Valley at least one track has been removed creating train delays that cause trains to sit on sidings for days, sometimes blocking access to property. The infrastructure for the railroads that use these tracks appears to be in decline, at least one railroad worker expressed concern that the current tracks "are unable to handle the railway traffic they have now." The existing railroads have a history of starting serious and life threatening fires in the area. Local traffic faces long delays or must seek alternate routes to avoid the resulting congestion of passing train delays.

## COMMENTS

### **Public Safety**

Every second counts in an emergency situation! Delays caused by coal train will endanger life and property for those who are on the wrong side of the tracks in an emergency situation. SWCC contacted several health care professionals, their answers were consistent with our concern;

***"A couple minutes is the difference between life and death in an emergency."***

Additionally, SWCC discovered that a difference of just a few minutes for emergency response will be the defining characteristic between a home saved and one totally destroyed by fire.<sup>1</sup> Who is responsible for the resulting individual loss caused by emergency response personnel delayed by a mile long coal train?

Our local communities have experienced tragic loss as a result of train and vehicle collisions. Increased train traffic will only enhance this problem as individuals are increasingly exposed to mile - and - one - half - coal - trains. Up to sixty trains daily in addition to existing train traffic! Chances of train/pedestrian; or train/bicycle collisions will substantially increase. This is of particular concern in the Marshall/Cheney area as abandoned railroad right of ways have been converted to recreational trails. Placing individuals close to these industrial trains is an obviously dangerous combination.

### **Public Health**

SWCC research led us to one undeniable conclusion - there will be significant adverse effects from the proposed action on public health. The town of Marshall and the surrounding community will face significant health risks. Marshall lies in a narrow valley with an inversion layer that is choking to local residents. Trains are often sided here as they await opportunity to enter the mainline. Diesel engines idling for days on end fill the valley with blue smoke. Diesel engines chugging up the grade under heavy load expel tremendous amounts of toxic diesel fumes. Trains reach speeds approaching sixty mile per hour on the downgrade raising dust and releasing coal dust into the atmosphere.

The cumulative effects of the proposal and the coal trains needed to feed the Gateway Pacific Terminal and other terminals, existing or proposed, is simply unacceptable for our community. Additionally, the Marshall Valley has a major feeder road adjacent the tracks and several mining operations nearby cumulatively degrading the health and wellbeing of every individual in the valley. Global concerns for air pollution must not be ignored.

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<sup>1</sup> See Time vs., Products of Combustion attachment. Please note that at 9-minutes flashover occurs - "No one survives flashover."

### **Fish and Wildlife.**

Hundreds of animals are killed each year by passing trains in the Marshall/Cheney area. To our knowledge no mitigation measures have ever been undertaken to protect native wildlife that is routinely slaughtered on the right of way. Wildlife migration corridors have been irrevocably and irreversibly altered by the rail traffic. Wild Turkeys and other wildlife are killed as they gather along the tracks in search of agricultural products that blow off passing trains, particularly in the winter. Increased train traffic will only increase wildlife fatalities while further disturbing migratory routes. Wildlife will be exposed to the same toxic diesel fumes and coal dust as humans.

SWCC is tremendously concerned for fish habitat and water quality having experienced train derailments throughout Southwest Spokane County. Heavy train traffic will only increase the likelihood of a derailment into Marshall Creek, Mini Creek, Queen Lucas Lake, or the hundreds of riparian areas traversed by these railroad right of ways. The potential for a disaster of epic portions must be mitigated against to protect the water quality in the Marshall Creek drainage. Who is going to contain the spill?

### **Commerce**

As proposed the Gateway Pacific Terminal will stifle local commerce. Commerce in Cheney is impeded every time a train passes thru that community while residents and local business owners wait for the trains to pass. The situation will only worsen with increased rail traffic. There is considerable concern that local producers forced to compete with Big Coal Companies will lose an economical means of transporting or receiving goods. (Supply & Demand) Farmers in a race against time will see decreased production as their vehicles, equipment, and employees are forced to wait for yet "another" coal train.

Globally, exporting Coal that Americans can't use to fuel economies that compete directly with American Industry is thoughtless at best. Coal that will be used in countries with some of the "worst" environmental records on the planet. Countries where social and economic justice was sacrificed long ago on the altar of greed.

### **Various Comments**

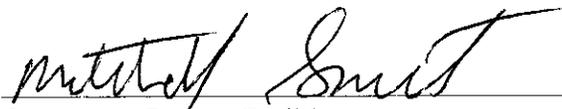
1. The cumulative effects of the proposed action must be critically analyzed and mitigated against. Areas of concern include:
  - Fish & Wildlife
  - Trade & Commerce
  - Public Safety
  - Public Health
  - Air Quality
  - Water Quality - locally, regionally, and globally including global warming.

2. Cost/benefit ratios must be accurately portrayed in the Environmental Impact Statement for decision makers to base their decisions. SWCC believes an accurate and truthful cost/benefit analysis will clearly demonstrate the foolishness of the proposal. The environmental consequences alone should make any competent decision maker skeptical of the proposal.
3. The project as proposed appears to be corporate welfare at its worst. Local, state and public agencies providing assistance to strengthen foreign corporations funded by American Taxpayers. Who pays for infrastructure improvements needed to handle increased rail traffic. Who pays for the environmental degradation resulting from this proposal, our children?

## CONCLUSION

Thousand of property owners will experience a diminished quality of life do to the environmental degradation directly and indirectly resulting from this project. Property owners along rail ways will have their quality of life marginalized by the additional coal trains. Coal trains are "noisy" and take a long time to pass. Additional train traffic will mean almost continuous train traffic in rural areas where one would expect quiet and tranquil surroundings.

Thank You for the opportunity to comment.



Southwest County Coalition

Lead Organizer

1/15/2013

# PRODUCTS OF COMBUSTION



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **TIME** (in minutes)

## ACTIONS BEFORE FIRE:

- 1) TEST SMOKE ALARMS
- 2) CONDUCT FIRE ESCAPE DRILLS

\*U.S. Experience With Smoke Alarms, and Other Fire Alarms, NFPA, September 2001.



Northern Illinois  
Fire Sprinkler  
Advisory Board  
The Sprinkler Association



Based upon national averages

NOTE: See NFPA Fire Protection Handbook for time and temperature information...

First name: Paxton (SWCC)

Last name: Smith

Email: paxton.smith@mac.com

Address: 12111 S. Gardner Rd.

City, State, Zip: Cheney, WA, 99004

Phone: 509-448-0681

Would you like to be added to the mailing list?  Yes  No

**Note:** Any information provided to the agencies will be posted on the website and may be released to a third party as part of the agencies' record for this action. This includes the release of identifiable personal information such as personal name, address, phone number, etc., that is provided in the response.



Combined NEPA/SEPA

**Environmental Impact Statement**  
Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur

Place  
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GPT/BNSF Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies  
c/o CH2MHILL  
1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400  
Bellevue, WA 98004



First name: Clancine (Swce)  
Last name: Smith  
Email: clancy.smith@mac.com  
Address: 12711 S Gardner  
City, State, Zip: Cheney WA 99004  
Phone: (509) 448-0681

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# Environmental Impact Statement Proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur

## Comment form

Please submit your comments on the Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur Environmental Impact Statement by January 21, 2013 to be included in the scoping summary report. Comments can also be submitted online at [www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](http://www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov).

### What part of the proposal does your comment relate to?

- Vessel
- Rail
- Industrial site
- Multiple/not listed

### Does your comment relate to any of the following topic areas? (check all that apply)

#### Human environment

- Noise
- Air quality
- Human health
- Traffic or safety
- Other human environment topic

#### Natural environment

- Wildlife or vegetation
- Marine species, fish or fisheries
- Wetlands or streams
- Water quality
- Other natural environment topic

#### EIS Process

- Alternatives
- Areas of potential effect
- EIS regulatory process
- Other EIS process topic

### Please share your comments below: (comments can also be attached to this form)

The health of our people would be compromised from the effects of coal dust and diesel fumes.

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First name: Syana (swcc)  
Last name: Manville  
Email: smanville@frontier.com  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be added to the mailing list?  Yes  No email only

**Note:** Any information provided to the agencies will be posted on the website and may be released to a third party as part of the agencies' record for this action. This includes the release of identifiable personal information such as personal name, address, phone number, etc., that is provided in the response.



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Against the transportation via rail of coal thru  
any countryside / city for environmental  
reasons. Coal dust contamination because  
of large amounts of railcars will damage  
all environments beyond repair.

Blockage of crossings must be considered  
as emergency situations will be effected  
and delayed.

The coal our land produces should not be  
sent any other country, especially where the  
poor air quality would be pushed to us via  
the jet airstream.

Too many negative reason to allow to happen.

First name: Brent (SWCC)

Last name: Smith

Email: brent.smith@mac.com

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be added to the mailing list?  Yes  No

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### Please share your comments below: (comments can also be attached to this form)

If we can't burn coal for environmental concerns, then we should not sell coal to be used for other countries power production.

Its a conflict thc we are told we can't do something, yet others can.

First name: Oliver SWCC

Last name: Smith

Email: Ollsmith@6@yahoo.com

Address: 5316 W. Jensen Rd.

City, State, Zip: Cheney, Wa 99004

Phone: (509) 444-8485

Would you like to be added to the mailing list?  Yes  No

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### Please share your comments below: (comments can also be attached to this form)

Transporting coal through Marshall is very stupid, and its to help a country that ~~now~~ already has a high ~~for~~ coal burning rate, which is very bad for the environment. And what's to gain? Money. That's the only reason you are exporting. Selfish, greedy people. The coal transport is also going to pollute my family owned lake, which is right along the railway. That's just ridiculous.

Sincerely,

Somebody who actually knows and cares about the environment.

First name: Rob Smith

Last name: Smith

Email: Robsmith315@centurylink.net

Address: S. 13605 Scribner St.

City, State, Zip: Cheney, WA 99004

Phone: (509) 448-8394

Would you like to be added to the mailing list?  Yes  No

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### Please share your comments below: (comments can also be attached to this form)

*This proposal is not well-thought out. The environmental implications to the landowners along the rail routes could be devastating. This proposed gateway is not what I we want.*

*Rob Hittler*

Bucc

First name: KAREN SMITH

Last name: SMITH

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: P. O. Box 128

City, State, Zip: MARSHALL WA 99020

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be added to the mailing list?  Yes  No

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Coal trains continuously traveling through the Marshall Creek watershed would be disastrous for our small community. Most of my concerns are traffic tie-ups involving medical emergency, or fire response. We've had many wildfires that were actually started by trains passing through that sent many of us packing our belongings to evacuate. Longer wait at train crossings would be dangerous for the residents who live in this area.