

Cliffside Community Club Board of Trustees

Sue Webber, President – 3935 Cliffside Drive, Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA
Marti Jones, Vice President – 3920 E Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA. 98225
Elizabeth Allen, Treasurer – 3946 Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA. 98225
Teresa Anderson, Secretary – 3947 Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA. 98225

Non-profit IRS Tax ID #80-0499388

GPT/BSNF Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies
c/o CH2M Hill
1100 112th Ave NE, Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004

January 6, 2013

To: Whatcom County, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

As secretary of our community's association, I have been directed to submit our concerns regarding the adverse affects SSA's proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point and the subsequent coal trains would have upon our community.

We are concerned about noise from coal trains.

There are 42 homes on Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA. This represents approximately 100 residents. These homes are very close to the BNSF RR tracks, ranging in proximity from 70' to 200 yds.

We are concerned about the increase of coal trains traveling through our community. We would be adversely impacted by the noise of trains sounding their horns, the noise from the heavy engines pulling the coal trains and the terrible screeching sound of metal on metal. Currently we experience these disturbances day and night, it disturbs our sleep, and it would be terrible to have this noise disturbance increase.

Studies show that this kind of noise disturbs sleep -
(<http://www.coaltrainfacts.org/docs/appendix-D.pdf>)

Please include studies in the EIS on how the noise from the increased coal train traffic would impact our lives, our sleep, our health.

To mitigate train noise, some cities have established quiet zones, in which safety modifications are made to public crossings; exempting trains from their horn soundings at the modified crossing. However, the high cost of significant improvements at public crossings borne by cities and taxpayers has been a deterrent. Moreover, once a crossing is converted into a quiet zone, liability shifts from the railroad to the city for any traffic or personal injury incurred within the quiet zone. (<http://www.coaltrainfacts.org/key-facts#noise>)

Please include the impact to the homes, schools, businesses all along the train routes from the mines to ports. We are one of thousands of neighborhoods affected by this SSA proposal.

Please include studies in the EIS on how the noise from the increased coal train traffic would be mitigated, the cost of such mitigations, and who would bear that cost in our neighborhood, in our city and all along the rail corridor the coal trains would travel.

Respectfully submitted for Cliffside Community,

Teresa J. Anderson
Teresa Anderson, Secretary

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As secretary of our community's association, I have been directed to submit our concerns regarding the adverse affects SSA's proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point and the subsequent coal trains would have upon our community.

We are concerned about the increased train traffic's adverse affect on us, as well as the entire region from mines to ports.

There are 42 homes on Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA. This represents approximately 100 residents. These homes are very close to the BNSF RR tracks, ranging in proximity from 70' to 200 yds.

Cliffside Drive is the only street by which we can access our homes. The RR tracks cross it at the entrance to our community. Increased train traffic will cut off the only road access to our community, thus delaying essential and emergency services. This would be a very serious impact. As it is now, long coal trains cause delays for us; usually 4 – 8 minutes for a coal train to pass.

An increase of 18-20 trains daily, especially the long coal trains, will greatly increase delays for residents traveling to and from our homes as well as for the businesses, trades people, and deliveries that cross the tracks many times each day. 18 trains daily, multiplied by 5 minutes is 90 minutes of delay, daily.

We have a number of elderly residents and we are also concerned about emergency services being delayed or prevented from reaching our residents. At times, trains are stopped, completely blocking the crossing.

At our crossing, we do not see an easily mitigated option. Perhaps a train trestle could be built and the Cliffside Drive road could be dug down to pass under it. But local tax payers cannot afford this. SSA and BNSF would have to bear the cost.

1. Please include in the EIS what such mitigations would cost and who would pay for them.
2. Please include the impact on our Cliffside community from the proposed increase of train traffic, the delays, the blocking of roads in the EIS studies.
3. Please research and include the impacts to our access and our health in the event of a derailment.
4. And please research these traffic concerns, and derailment concerns for the entire rail corridor that these coal trains will travel from mines to ports and back. There are a tremendous number of communities and businesses that would be impacted by the proposed coal train traffic and proposed coal terminals at Cherry Pt and the others along the Pacific coast.
5. The impact on the entire region needs to be included in the EIS.
6. And please include studies on the cost of rail improvements, adding side rails, safety improvements to the RR crossings and who would pay for those.

Respectfully submitted for Cliffside Community,

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As secretary of our community's association, I have been directed to submit our concerns regarding the adverse affects SSA's proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point and the subsequent coal trains would have upon our community.

This is a lovely community built along the cliff overlooking Bellingham Bay. There are 42 homes on Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA. This represents approximately 100 residents. These homes are very close to the BNSF RR tracks, ranging in proximity from 70' to 200 yds. The tracks cross our one and only road in and out of our community.

We are concerned about the **reduced property value** in our neighborhood due to the adverse effects of increased coal train traffic such as traffic delays, derailments, air pollution, surface water pollution, noise disturbance, vibrations and bank destabilization.

Please include these economic impacts in the EIS.

These economic impacts are not only a concern for our neighborhood. Please include the thousands of neighborhoods, businesses, communities along the coal train routes from mines to ports.

Property values could suffer near the coal train corridor. Entrepreneur Magazine found that the worth of small homes near freight rail lines decrease 5-7%. Ranching and agricultural properties are often bisected by rail lines and therefore are particularly affected by increased coal train traffic. The productive value of these properties is further diminished by damages to water supply caused by strip mining in the Powder River Basin. A new study examining Los Angeles neighborhoods supports the notion that home values decrease as nearby rail traffic increases.

<http://www.coaltrainfacts.org/key-facts#property>

A new study commissioned by Seattle-based Climate Solutions concluded that a proposal to run as many as 18 1.6-mile-long coal trains a day through Seattle to a new coal terminal in Bellingham could cost property owners along the route as much as \$265 million in lost property values.

The report also concludes that the trains would likely “cause isolation and business interruption effects for properties in the immediate” vicinity of the train tracks; cause accidents and make it harder for ambulances and fire trucks to reach their destinations; and cause disruptive vibration and noise. http://www.powerpastcoal.org/?post_type=news&p=1825

Study <http://climatesolutions.org/nw-states/coal-train-study>

Respectfully submitted for Cliffside Community,

Teresa Z. Anderson
Teresa Anderson, Secretary

da.tz@comcast.net

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As secretary of our community's association, I have been directed to submit our concerns regarding the adverse affects SSA's proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point and the subsequent coal trains would have upon our community.

There are 42 homes on Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA. This represents approximately 100 residents. These homes are very close to the BNSF RR tracks, ranging in proximity from 70' to 200 yds.

We are concerned about the adverse effects from increased diesel emissions and from coal dust particles.

Please include these concerns and study how this will affect

- ~ the air in our area,
- ~ the surface water in our area; the coal trains travel very close to the shoreline of Bellingham Bay and the estuary of the Nooksack River
- ~ people with asthma and respiratory illnesses living near the tracks,
- ~ the air and surface water pollution of the thousands of homes, schools, businesses, communities all along the rail corridors the coal trains will travel from mines to ports.

Each coal railcar loses roughly 500 pounds of coal dust during each trip to the coast – more than 30 tons per train on average. This coal dust goes into air, water, and land. It also accumulates on the tracks, increasing the risk of derailments. In addition to coal dust, all of these trains are powered by diesel engines. In areas where the trains will be idling (e.g., Laurel, Montana), the unhealthy increase in diesel emissions could be substantial.

(<http://www.coaltrainfacts.org/docs/New-Coal-export-factsheet-FNL-4-12-111.pdf>)

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Cliffside Community is built along the cliff overlooking Bellingham Bay. There are 42 homes on Cliffside Drive, Bellingham, WA (approximately 100 residents). The BNSF train track runs very close to our homes. Proximity of tracks to our homes ranges from 70' to 200 yds.

And just east of Cliffside Drive, the tracks are within a few feet of the edge of the bluff.

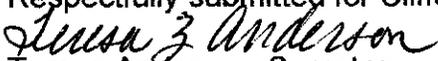
We have serious concerns about the **destabilization of our high bank** from the vibrations caused by additional train traffic and the significant weight of coal trains. Currently when the coal trains rumble by, we feel the vibrations in our houses, and glasses in the cupboards clink.

Please do studies, do actual, local measurements on the effects that the vibrations from increased coal train traffic would have on bank destabilization for our properties and for the bluffs all along the shoreline corridor of Bellingham, Chuckanut, Everett, Edmonds, Seattle, etc.

Also include how BNSF routes the drainage of water away from their tracks and the impacts that has on our properties and our high banks.

And please include costs to mitigate these problems and who would pay for them.

Respectfully submitted for Cliffside Community,


Teresa Anderson, Secretary