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Whatcom County P&DS

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Peter Goldmark
Commissioner of Public Lands
WA Dept of Natural Resources
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RE: Affects on Stanwood of proposed coal export terminal at Cherry Point (10/26/12)

Dear Agencies:

Our concerns for the proposed Cherry Point export terminal are based on the following reasons:

- The increased number of trains and traffic delays would literally split our city in two. The train tracks run north-south directly through the heart of the city's business district.
- The export facility could add 18 more train trips a day, (9 north, 9 south), extending 1 ½ miles long, which at 30 mph would mean about 6-7 minutes between train approach warning and ultimate gate opening, or at 5 mph could take 14-18 minutes to clear a crossing. The 18 trains a day, added to the existing 6 trains would equate to one additional coal train every hour, all day long.

Due to speed restrictions and approach warning, trains through Stanwood's downtown means the barriers are down for 6-8 minutes for the larger freight trains a mile or longer. This is equal to 3-4 continuous red light cycles in a row on 271st Street, which will severely impact access at the north end of Stanwood right where the downtown core is located. Shoppers would be forced to go around and avoid the downtown area and may choose other places to shop to avoid the train delays.

The recent traffic study commissioned for the City of Stanwood documents that the 1 ½ mile long trains will severely impact the downtown core and also impede

emergency vehicles. Noise, dust and vibration from the trains would also impact businesses in the nearby vicinity of the train tracks. The increased train traffic would directly set back planned economic revitalization for the downtown via Sustainable Stanwood.

We believe any environmental analysis of the Cherry Point Coal Export terminal must include analysis of traffic congestion, quality of life, economic, and health and safety impacts as well as losses of public investments, to cities, businesses, and communities along the coal train route. The coal trains must be considered as a significant portion of the export terminal project.

Sincerely,

Stanwood Area Merchants Association (SAMA)
Steering Committee

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