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18 January 2013

GPT/BNSF Custer Spur Co-Lead Agencies
1199 112th Avenue N.E., Suite 400
Bellevue, Washington 98004

Re: Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Gateway Pacific
Terminal/Custer Spur

To Whom It May Concern:

We urge all the agencies involved in the Environmental Impact Statement concerning the Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point, north of Bellingham, and at other coal terminals contemplated elsewhere in Washington State and in Oregon, to consider the totality of impact all along the route from the Power River Basin to the terminals themselves. We request that the EIS be a system-wide assessment of the consequences of this massive proposal.

As someone whose career was in the mining industry, and who has personal experience with coal mined in the Powder River Basin, I am opposed to the building of the coal terminal at Cherry Point for a number of reasons, among which we enumerate the following:

Among the many reasons my wife and I oppose this gigantic export terminal, which we understand will be served by up to eighteen trains daily, each up to a mile and a half long, are concerns that this large number of trains will block streets not only here in Skagit County (where we live), but in every community along the way, including the Washington State cities of Spokane, Vancouver, and all the communities between Seattle north to Bellingham. As these

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frequent coal trains block traffic, they potentially will delay emergency vehicles. Someone will surely die because an ambulance cannot get to its destination in a timely manner, or buildings will be destroyed because fire trucks cannot get through.

Another major concern is the possibility of derailment, with the ensuing problems of pollution should this occur on a trestle going over water, or be an extreme danger to people and their property, should a derailment occur in a built-up area on land.

We do admit that we have been paying more attention recently to reports of train accidents, but they certainly are frequent, and in all parts of the country. Will the added use of the BNSF rails plus the added weight of the long coal trains increase the incidents of train derailments in our area?

Also, with up to eighteen additional trains daily, each up to a mile and a half long, what will happen to other users of the railroad tracks, such as Amtrak and the shippers of grain, apples, and other products?

Although the coal trains will not pass through Anacortes itself, the coal ships will pass through our archipelago waters, with the potential to generate significant adverse marine vessel traffic impacts, and with the possibility of fouling our waters and damaging the marine ecology.

Jobs are given as a reason for this massive build-up in coal export. What about all the companies along the route which the ensuing train traffic will force to be closed or which will have their business severely impacted by the train traffic, causing a huge number of people to lose their jobs. The 300-400 permanent new jobs in Whatcom County that the Cherry Point Terminal claims will be generated are a pittance when one considers the potential loss of jobs throughout a large portion of the United States.

Furthermore, since Washington State is phasing out the use of coal for its in-state power plants because of environmental concerns, it does not seem to us to be sensible to send our coal to China, with its much laxer environmental standards, to create electricity to enable China to more directly compete with

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jobs in this country. To add insult to injury, not only would these massive coal exports lead to the loss of jobs for American citizens, but the pollution will find its way across the ocean to foul our own shores and lead to great acidification of the oceans and pollute the earth and air with arsenic and heavy metals.

If the Gateway Pacific Terminal is built, we need to impose a stiff energy tax on the coal, as a partial remediation for the loss of energy products, damage to the environment, and as a partial contribution to compensate for the further export of U.S. jobs to China.

Thank you for considering our views as you make this momentous decision.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Heiner

Virginia E. Heiner