

## Submitted for Public Comments re: Gateway Pacific Coal Terminal EIS Scoping for Coal Transport - Environmental Dangers & Safety

From: Dwight Schrag (3 pages enclosed)  
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January 11, 2013

Subject: [Docket number COE-2012-0016](#)

To: e-mail: [comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov](mailto:comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov)

ATTN: [Mr. Randall Perry, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle, WA & Department of Ecology & Tyler Schroeder - WhatcomCounty Planning Manager](#)

**Dear Gateway EIS-Scope Planners:**

This scoping information supplements my previous EIS comments. The entire project should be canceled, just like the train service has been canceled for months now. 140+ trips canceled on Sounder trains, a new record. BNSF is clearly unable and unwilling to maintain the North railroad route due to continuing acts of God.

This route is not safe for coal-train rail traffic. Sending coal down these tracks will create even greater environmental and economic disasters. [Deaths will occur and coal will spill into Puget Sound.](#)

Now \$16 million of public WSDOT funds are diverted to try to fix this catastrophic rail-corridor for no plausible reason. The corridor must be permanently closed if safety of people cannot be assured.

Use of public funds by BNSF is unacceptable, not approved by voters and thus, is illegal. [Cancel the Gateway Project now or there will be many, ongoing lawsuits and legal challenges to deal with.](#)

Sincerely, Dwight Schrag, WA resident

(See 2013 News Reports & Examples of Environmental Disasters Below)

## **New mudslide cancels train service north of Seattle**

By Michelle Esteban & KOMO Staff Published: Jan 8, 2013 at 7:47 AM PST Last Updated: Jan 8, 2013 at 6:15 PM PST

Source: [www.komonews.com/news/local/New-mudslide-cancels-train-service-north-of-](http://www.komonews.com/news/local/New-mudslide-cancels-train-service-north-of-)

MUKILTEO, Wash. - A fresh mudslide has hit tracks north of Seattle, triggering yet another 48-hour moratorium on passenger train service between Seattle and Everett.

Passenger train service in the corridor had just been cleared to resume at about 4 a.m. Sunday following two mudslides that hit the tracks last week. The latest slide hit at about 9:30 p.m. Monday.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe spokesman Gus Melonas said two freight trains in the area were alerted by a signal system and stopped short of the slide, which hit about two miles south of Mukilteo.

**The spokesman says it's the 73rd slide along the rail tracks between Seattle and Everett since Thanksgiving.** Sound Transit's Sounder service has had 19 full or partial service cancellations on their 26 service days since Dec. 1.

"The trips that we've had to cancel as a result of mudslides is 134 as of this morning," said Sound Transit spokesperson Kimberly Reason on Tuesday.

**By Wednesday morning, the number of canceled trips will surpass 140.**

"It has been remarkable," said Reason.

**BNSF calls it the worst mudslide season in a generation.**

"We have crews positioned to rapidly respond, and we are continuing to look at ways that we can help fight Mother Nature," Melonas said.

**A \$16 million grant secured by the state Department of Transportation is at work, looking for a better fix.**

Sound Transit said the cancellations have not hurt its bottom dollar since it is **paid, in large part, by subsidized dollars** and most riders are pass holders. "So in fact, **we save money by not operating Sounder**, which

is not our goal; our goal is to be a reliable service for our passengers," said Reason.

## North Sounder Mudslides Breaking Record

January 4, 2013 at 7:05 am

by Martin H. Duke

Photo by WSDOT (2008 mudslide)

After a brief respite where the trains actually ran yesterday morning, Sounder is yet again grounded through the weekend. The Jan. 3rd morning trips were the first North Sounder runs since December 17th, according to spokeswoman Kimberly Reason.

**The previous seasonal record was 70 canceled trips in the winter of 2010-2011. This winter we've annihilated that mark, with 122 canceled trips and more than 2 months to go. It's not your imagination; it really is worse than usual.**

*Note:* Between writing and "publication" of this post, the *Times* printed similar information and much more.

### ***97 Responses to North Sounder Mudslides Breaking Record***

**lazarus says:**

January 4, 2013 at 7:28 am

It's time to get serious about a landslide mitigation plan for these areas. This affects both freight and passenger traffic, and we can't have either.

**Brent says:**

January 4, 2013 at 7:48 am

**You're right. If it isn't safe for passengers, then it isn't safe for coal, oil, or other hazardous materials.**

Also, if track maintenance is BNSF's responsibility, ST should get a reimbursement of a huge chunk of its perpetual easement.

**Unfortunately, government agencies are not known for suing to collect on undelivered goods and services.**

The extra engines and passenger cars could be put to better use on South Sounder. BNSF may not want to pay out, but they could reach a deal for a bunch more South Sounder easements.