

## **COMMENTS RE THE PROPOSED COAL TERMINAL at CHERRY POINT**

Re EIS and Scoping Process

Please be advised that I echo any and all concerns of anyone and everyone who has testified, corresponded, e-mailed or other-wised voiced their legitimate concerns, as well as opposition, in regard to the GPT proposed project.

Please be further advised that I do not believe that SSA Marine has any right to use this land in the proposed manner, mostly due to their disregard and even damage to the environment and their blatant disregard for the law and the permitting process as well as their lack of transparency.

Having said that, I'd like to address something that not too many, if any, people are discussing, especially at the hearings, and that is SSA Marine, the company itself, not just their proposed project, and the other companies involved, particularly Goldman Sachs.

It is my understanding that they started this project (physically) before any permits were even in place! And that they did significant damage to the hearing grounds as well! This fact alone should be grounds enough to deny the permit! (And not go through this process.)

I am extremely distressed that the lead agencies are even going through this process, as if the project had any true merit, especially when this company has repeatedly shown itself to be a lawbreaker.

They are suppose to be monitoring the herring grounds, but not only are they not monitoring the herring grounds, they have done significant damage to the herring grounds!

Furthermore, in attempting to correct damage they did in the aquatic reserve (an area protected by law!), they did even more damage! (Source: Bellingham Herald) At the rate they are going, the herring grounds will be destroyed before they even get a permit! And that is exactly why they should not get a permit! These people cannot be trusted!

In addition, federal law trumps state and local laws regarding Native American issues--disturbing cultural sites and ancestral burial grounds, not to mention damaging their means of livelihood (salmon fishing that is critically dependent on the herring and eelgrass)--why are they even being considered for a permit under such circumstances? This fact alone should be grounds enough to deny the permit! (And not waste public resources

going through this process.)

It is my understanding that they do not have a very good record when it comes to treatment of employees.

The have shown a blatant disregard for safety and have been cited for many safety violations; five at the Port of Long Beach alone, one of them *willful!* (Source: OSHA web site)

And there's that employee who died at their facility in Long Beach, CA ☹️ I believe they were fined \$90,100; (Source: OSHA) Is this what someone's life is worth?

SSA Marine has shown a blatant disregard for the environment, and if this ridiculous proposal were to be approved, will there be problems of them violating the environment and the laws that protect it because it is cheaper to pay any fines involved than obey the law? And will they pay the fines, assuming they even get caught? Even if they were caught, would they be found guilty? Would they even be prosecuted?

Along with that, what is their safety record regarding the transport of the coal (that is, transfer from rail to yard to ship)? And while we're on the subject, if this were to be approved--HEAVEN FORBID!--and there is an accident, which there undoubtedly will be, and not just one, but many, what will be their level of preparedness to deal with a derailed train full of dirty, dusty, toxic coal? And who will ultimately pay for these costs? Citizens? In addition to blocking access to emergency services, what would a disaster like that do to the typically small budgets of emergency service agencies? What people--not employed by SSA Marine, Peabody Coal, Goldman Sachs, Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad--will be put at risk? What private and public property will be damaged or destroyed? What would such a catastrophe do to wildlife? Who will pay for wildlife rehab? Loss of shellfish beds? Damage to the tourism industry? And on and on and on...

In view of the many recent mudslides along the rail route between Everett and Seattle, we need to be thinking worse case scenario. In addition, train derailments are on the rise, even when there is no mudslide!

Some are touting this project because of the increased tax revenue that will supposedly benefit the County, but what is SSA Marine's record of paying taxes? Far too many corporations in this country pay no taxes!\* In addition, some of the supposed millions in tax revenue will actually not be paid in cash but will be seen as a decrease in the surrounding property owner's' tax (Source: Bellingham Herald); how does that translate to

revenue?

And any consulting firm can come up with a foregone conclusion or a pre-determined assessment, especially if you pay them enough.

I'm also concerned that Patty Murray's husband works for SSA Marine; although, she is not part of the decision-making agencies, I fear for the influence she may have to help this project along; it is my understanding that her, Maria Cantwell, and Kelli Linville (as well as other politicians) have all received money from the coal terminal proponents, and that is of great concern to me as well; shame on all of them!

And this is just some of the stuff I know about--probably the mere tip of the iceberg.

Additionally, I am very distressed about the coal proponents busing people to the hearings and paying them to testify or to keep opponents from testifying; and Craig Cole, spokesperson for the project (?), admitted this, according to an article in the Bellingham Herald; his comments regarding "tit for tat" are disturbing! When they decide they don't want to follow the rules and regulations, will they rationalize breaking the law because someone else broke the law?

I also have a big problem with the process of the scoping hearings, which I hope to address in a separate document (especially the Seattle hearing).

I did attend the Bellingham hearing, but I didn't find the main hearing, and the PA in the smaller auditorium was not audible; and I did not get a chance to testify which was a big disappointment; I don't feel that a lottery system is an appropriate way to conduct a public hearing, especially one(s) of this magnitude.

So, in addition to everything that has already been stated, the companies involved in this ludicrous proposal--SSA Marine, Goldman Sachs, Peabody Coal, Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad--need to be thoroughly investigated as to their past record(s) on every level.

For example, to get you steered in the right direction, what if Goldman Sachs (who owns 51% of SSA Marine and who has already benefited from \$64 billion in the Wall Street bank bailout at the expense of taxpayers ☹) needs another bailout at taxpayer expense? Then that would be a factor to consider, especially in regard to this claim of creating millions in tax revenues for Whatcom County; who would ultimately pay? Citizens? Again? Who is going to pay for the much needed improvements to the failing railroad infrastructure? Or needed upgrades to railroad crossings?

Or bridges that will have to be rebuilt? Already they are asking us to pay for the consequences of problems they will create!

And, in view of the information in this document, the people who have claimed that SSA Marine is going to follow all the rules and regulations are guilty of misrepresentation, at best, and out and out lies, at worst! They should be prosecuted for perjury!

In closing, I would like to say that this is truly one of the most dumb and dangerous ideas ever that will mostly benefit corporate coffers at the expense to communities, corporations that have already shown their true colors and allegiance, corporations that have a poor track record when it comes to matters like treatment of employees, safety and obeying the laws, corporations that continue to benefit while we pay the costs and suffer countless negative consequences.

If I had more time, I'd have more comments, but--unlike the proponents of this project--I am not being paid to do this.

\*Source: Social Alternative: "According to the GAO (Government Accountability Office), two thirds of U S corporations pay absolutely no federal income taxes."