

January 12, 2013

TO THE OFFICIALS OF GATEWAY PACIFIC TERMINAL:

I live in the Chuckanut community of Bellingham, one of several small residential communities along the BSNF rail line that will be transporting coal to the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT). The proposed project that will require up to 18 additional coal trains to travel through my community daily will have a significant impact that must be addressed in the GPT Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Here are my concerns:

1. **NOISE** – The noise and vibrations of unusually long, heavy and frequent trains will damage the structural integrity of the homes that are close to the tracks in this geologically fragile area. This kind of impact has already been experienced here with much lighter rail traffic. In addition, the chronic noise exposure could affect the health and quality of life of persons nearby.
2. **TRAFFIC PROBLEMS** – at least two of the streets in the community have only one path of entry and exit that crosses the railroad tracks. Residential homeowners, inc. children walking home from the school bus drop, will be inconvenienced by the frequent traffic, and also the firetrucks and emergency aid vehicles who may have to enter the neighborhood would be significantly delayed, with potentially disastrous consequences.
3. **COASTAL TOURISM AND RECREATION** – Fishing, boating, and hiking, as well as general beauty and livability of the community will be adversely affected by the constant noise, traffic congestion, and possible pollution resulting from transporting the coal, and possible spills, collisions or accidents along the tracks. There is a state park in the community, and the rail line runs directly through it, past campers and beachcombers. Both the marine and rail routes have the potential to adversely affect the coastal life in this community.
4. **PROPERTY VALUES** – A recent study at the Eastman Company of Seattle by a real estate consultant found that the value of family residential properties within 600 feet of the proposed route in Whatcom county could drop by 5% to 20% due to increased coal train traffic to and from the terminal. Traffic congestion, noise, vibration, safety concerns, and pollution, and stigma, were cited as the main reasons.
5. **COSTS TO TAXPAYERS** – In order to mitigate adverse impacts, pay for public health results, or compensate for lost tourism trade and property values, additional costs will no doubt be incurred. What are these costs and how will we, the taxpayers, pay these costs?

Although I do not feel that there is any action that can be taken to mitigate all these problems, I request that, at least, the EIS must encompass the entire transportation corridor so that communities along the rail and marine routes are considered. Comprehensive studies must be done to address each of the concerns I've outlined above.

Thank you for your consideration,
Elizabeth Wright. Homeowner
280 Chuckanut Point Road, Bellingham, WA 98229