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Submission Text

I am also a resident of Birch Bay, well within the 5-mile radius of Cherry Point: the designated place which SSA/PIT have chosen to try to build a coal shipping port for use overseas. You don't have enough space for me to tell you all the reasons why this plan is insane, but I will give you a few. It is obvious that SSA/PIT have solicited your support, so you can utilize the coal in the Otter Creek Mine and use Cherry Point as your shipping point. In general, in the last 250 years, our world has already burned enough coal to create a crisis in the atmosphere, which is leading every living thing in jeopardy. It is the consensus of most learned people that we advance to cleaner, sustainable fuels. While it is true that there has always been some CO₂ in the atmosphere, the amount has risen to over 400 ppm in the last 250 years. Prior to that, our atmosphere remained relatively steady for over 800,000 years. Now, the excess CO₂ which cannot be utilized by plants and the oceans are creating a global weather nightmare for generations to come. This is the basic science - do we want this for our children. Here in Whatcom County we do not want the toxicity or the train traffic that coal will bring. Gateway Pacific Terminal alone will add 18 more trains per day coming and going, creating huge amounts of deisel fumes, noise pollution, along with traffic impedements. With more Powder River Coal coming down from the Otter Creek Mine in Montana will add greatly to this mess. The pollution caused from coal dust and the heavy metals therein, is already here, thanks to the Westshore Terminal in B.C. In addition, we have two refineries at Cherry Point, as well as an aluminum smelter. Our oceans here in the Northwest are already suffering greatly, due to acidification caused by too much CO₂, which is converted into carbonic acid. The "greenhouse effect" is causing the overall temperature of the ocean to rise, which have affected the salmon finding their normal pathways as they return to their place of birth in the inland rivers. As I write, they are dying in the Columbia River. We don't need or want GPT and we definitely don't need or want more coal coming into our county from Montana. A new railroad across the Tongue River will expose that river to more pollution and/or accidents which would cause further pollution. It is my belief and philosophy that human beings need to protect the earth and all it's systems and biodiversity. For it is because of the fragile balance that enables life on earth. We are nothing but stupid, greedy beings if we do not honor the way the environment works together with living things in harmony. The answer is to STOP shipping more and more coal or any toxic substances anywhere. The answer is to use sustainable energy sources to maximum benefit and change the way we live and farm. That philosophy will create more jobs that you can imagine. Please take a moment to relect on the negative effects of what you are proposing to do, for it is a HUGE MISTAKE. Thank you for your attention to my point of view. Christine Westland