



SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL
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03/14/12

Tyler R. Schroeder
Whatcom Planning and Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, Washington 98226

RECEIVED
MAR 19 2012
Whatcom County P&DS

Cc: Randel Perry, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;
Alice Kelly, Department of Ecology – Northwest

Re: Scoping Hearings for Gateway Pacific Terminals NEPA/SEPA Process

Dear Mr. Schroeder, Mr. Perry, Ms. Kelly:

Regardless of where coal export terminals may be built in Washington and Oregon, the citizens of Spokane are purported to bear at least a ten-fold increase in coal train traffic as the state entry point of 130 million tons of coal per year from the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming. The citizens of Spokane have already shown their interest in being engaged in this discussion and have demonstrated their desire for inclusion in the NEPA/SEPA process by holding a variety of local meetings including a Coal Train Forum this past summer. Based on local interest already shown, the community's continued engagement and the impacts that will be felt in Spokane by its citizens I **respectfully request that you include Spokane in the schedule of public hearings on the EIS process for the Cherry Point export facility.**

One of the greatest impacts from a significant increase in coal train traffic is serious health problems from breathing diesel exhaust emissions and escaping coal dust containing toxic substances linked to birth defects, cancer, and increased asthma and lung disease in children. Other possible impacts include noise pollution and lowered property values, traffic and first responder/utility delays at crossings, competition with passenger travel and other goods transportation by rail, increased risk of derailments caused by coal dust accumulation on the rails, air pollution, and economic challenges related to infrastructure upgrades. Additionally there is significant concern over increased risk to the Spokane-Rathdrum Prairie "Sole Source" Aquifer from fuel leaks at the BNSF refueling station located directly over the regions only source of fresh, clean drinking water.

Regardless of one's position on coal or coal exports, there are real risks and probable adverse environmental impacts to our communities from increased coal train traffic that should be thoroughly analyzed and presented to citizens who live in Spokane. Those living near the rail lines and most affected, in particular, should be asked to be part of the discussion. These concerns go to the heart of our quality of life – Spokane area residents deserve to have the impacts of increased coal train traffic studied, the facts presented to them, and their feedback heard in the scoping of these terminals.



This very important decision will affect all of our lives. A public hearing in Spokane will, at the very least, show an effort to provide an open, public forum for citizens from around the area to provide input into this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amber Waldref". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being particularly prominent.

Amber Waldref
Spokane City Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon Snyder". The signature is more angular and less cursive than the one to its left.

Jon Snyder
Spokane City Council