

From: [Sherilyn Wells](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: I urge you to pas strong protections to safeguard Cherry Point, our communities and the Salish Sea
Date: Sunday, June 24, 2018 7:20:22 AM

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June 24, 2018

Dear Whatcom County Council,

Honorable council members,

In the 1990's, when our Growth Management Planning process began, a large, diverse coalition of county residents stood up for the importance of protecting Cherry Point's unique contributions to the regional ecosystem (herring, salmon, etc.), even though Cherry Point was also an industrial area. It was always about protecting that delicate balance, ensuring that whatever facilities were constructed were consistent with the protection of that area's critical ecosystem/fisheries, too.

Fishing IS an industry, but one which doesn't have nearly as many location options as a human-constructed facility, so acknowledging where critical fisheries exist is an important protection for a vital economic interest whose impact goes far beyond county borders. Subsequent attempts to increase ecosystem risk by constructing threatening new industrial facilities at Cherry Point failed as a result of this important fact.

In light of Canadian government's decision to buy out Kinder Morgan, it appears that shortsighted thinking may once again be a concern, given the risk of Cherry Point being promoted as a transshipment point to load tankers with 'tar sands' heavy crude oil from Canada's Trans Mountain (Puget Sound) Pipeline. All too obviously, this would increase the risk of an oil spill threatening Tribal treaty rights, our Salish Sea communities, shorelines and endangered species (orcas and salmon).

Thank you for what you have done to date to ensure our fisheries survive, but I propose a new standard - that these valuable ecosystems be able to THRIVE again in the future, not just survive.

Therefore, I urge you to enact the strongest possible protections in our county's land-use code, including prohibitions and strict conditions for permits in the Cherry Point UGA. New facilities to ship coal, oil or gas should be prohibited, and existing facilities should be held to the highest standards for safety and pollution control.

Permits for any upgrades must require a full SEPA EIS review of cumulative impacts. These must include a greenhouse gas life-cycle analysis, total mitigation of climate pollution, and conditions to require no adverse impacts on herring, salmon, orca, or other endangered species.

Furthermore, the County should not be processing permits for projects that have not yet been authorized as compliant with federal laws and treaties governing the Salish Sea. How about "The Buck Stops Here" being the new Council stance, so that no longer do we allow outside interests to play one level of our government off against another? United we stand...

Here in Whatcom County, we have seen the impact of increased oil transport when two oil-by-rail unloading facilities resulted in near-daily shipments of >100-unit explosive tank cars through Bellingham and Ferndale, with only limited public and environmental review. And anyone who witnessed the tragic, but limited, pipeline explosion in Whatcom Falls Park, when three young men died, became aware of the potential for what a full-blown explosion could deliver. Once again, we are seeing the potential for this risk.

Please put these necessary protections into law. Thank you for your hard work and diligence in service of our county.

Sincerely,
Sherilyn Wells