

From: [Barry Wenger](#)
To: [PDS Planning Commission](#)
Subject: For Sept 12th PC Meeting - Protect Cherry Point Refineries Status AND Environment
Date: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 2:10:00 PM

Whatcom County Planning Commissioners,

On Sept 12, 2019, there will be a public hearing for the proposed Cherry Point land use ordinance that I will not be able to attend so please accept these written comments in lieu of my attendance. In the following weeks, you will have the first opportunity in decades to clarify and strengthen the over-arching land use policy to ensure that it protects our community, workers, our local economy, our climate, and the life-giving Salish Sea. Many things have changed since the refineries were first built 50 years ago to process Alaska crude oil. Our policies and rules have not kept up with global pressures for different types of fossil fuel sources e.g. tar-sands materials, fracked Bakken crude and liquid natural gas, etc or the impacts they may have on our changed world i.e. climate change, endangered salmon and Orcas etc and the heightened risks to our very way of life.

In recent years, several significant fossil fuel expansion projects received permits from Whatcom County without adequate evaluation or significant public input. In fact, the proponents of the rail yards that were put in at Cherry Point did not disclose that the crude oil that was being brought in was not the usual heavy North Slope type of non-explosive oil but a new, highly explosive fracked material that can be touched off by a mere spark! AND, it was not disclosed that the old tank cars that were bringing the dangerous material would break apart and catch fire/explode if they derailed going as slow as 7 mph! (the newest design has only improved that factor by 1 mph to 8 mph). Industry knew the facts but hid the dangers from us. If not criminal, then clearly morally and ethically wrong. What else do they know that they are not telling us? Other communities have had explosions that leveled their towns with great loss of life and property from exactly what we are facing here. Our community and our neighbors along the West Coast have been subject to numerous proposed fossil fuel expansion projects – crude oil export, oil trains, coal trains, propane, methanol, xylene export, liquefied natural gas storage, bunkering and transport –that would each have significant impacts if allowed here. Given this pattern of secrecy of these risks on our region, better and transparent evaluation of these projects is crucially needed.

The draft forwarded to you by the County Council has been under development for more than a year. It is informed by Comprehensive Plan Policies adopted in 2017, extensive legal review by Cascadia Law, County Council's formal requests for input from industry stakeholders last December, informal discussions with labor leaders, community leaders, and environmental leaders, as well as dozens of hours of public meetings by the County Council, and hundreds and hundreds of public comments.

With that in mind, I urge you to focus on making sure that the details of the policy will align with the council's clearly established intent and then move the policy forward in a timely manner. Our community, your families and mine, deserve no less now and in their future.

Sincerely,

Barry A. Wenger

Whatcom County resident & taxpayer