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To: [Barry Buchanan](#); [Todd Donovan](#); [Carol Frazey](#); [Satpal Sidhu](#); [Rud Browne](#); [Barbara Brenner](#); [Tyler Byrd](#); [Council](#); [PDS Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Jack Louws](#)
Subject: Regarding CEBR's 2014 and 2019 "Employment At Cherry Point" reports
Date: Sunday, December 15, 2019 1:14:29 PM

Dear Whatcom County Council members and Whatcom County Planning Commission members,

As you continue to work through the proposed amendments to the Whatcom County's comprehensive plan and code regarding the Cherry Point industrial zone, I wanted to send you a new report which I put together for *The Searchlight Review*.

The Searchlight Review is an online publication I founded in April of 2018, which covers a variety of social, political, and environmental issues in the Pacific Northwest region.

Since it is my belief that CEBR's 2014 and 2019 "Employment At Cherry Point" reports have continued to be used for advocacy, I felt it was important to find out more about the overall process in terms of how CEBR's 2014 and 2019 "Employment at Cherry Point" reports were produced, and what kind of involvement there was on the part of the funder of those reports, the WBA, so I investigated that to the best of my ability.

After combing through a formidable number of public records, I assembled a 50+ page report offering detailed analysis of those. Specifically, the report examines public records related to the 2014 Employment at Cherry Point report which were obtained in October of 2017 from Western Washington University (WWU), and examines public records related to the 2019 Employment at Cherry Point report which were obtained from WWU which were sent in installments during the months of April, May, June and July of 2019.

Those two Cherry Point employment reports were prepared by Western Washington University's Center for Economic and Business Research (CEBR), and were commissioned by the Whatcom Business Alliance (WBA).

As you likely already know, the WBA and other groups and companies have been using CEBR's 2014 "Employment at Cherry Point" report to advocate for the then-proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal, and they have been using that 2014 report and CEBR's 2019 "Employment at Cherry Point" report to advocate for additional fossil fuel expansion and project development at Cherry Point.

Additionally, the WBA and other groups and companies have been using CEBR's two Cherry Point employment reports to oppose potential changes in policy and code regarding land use in Whatcom County in terms of the proposed Cherry Point amendments.

I also remember when several years ago both the WBA and the no-longer-active Northwest Jobs Alliance (created to promote the Gateway Pacific Terminal project)

submitted January 8, 2016 comment letters to the Planning Commission, requesting that CEBR's 2014 "Employment at Cherry Point" (referred to on the coalition's website as the "Economic Impact Study dated October 2014") report be included by reference in the County's comprehensive plan, and to be part of the official record. Fortunately, CEBR's 2014 report was not included by reference in the County's comprehensive plan.

For example, recently, some of you may have been seeing the sponsored Facebook ads and online ads, or may have heard radio ads, for the Whatcom Coalition for Economic Growth. This "coalition" is a fairly new project of the Whatcom Business Alliance that appears to be putting on a full court press during this time that the County's planning commission is reviewing the proposed Cherry Point amendments to the County's comprehensive plan and code before sending its recommendations to the County Council.

The WBA's Whatcom Coalition for Economic Growth project's website presents an oppositional position to the Cherry Point amendments and, to a noticeable degree, even to the County Council members who are supportive of the amendments.

CEBR's 2019 "Employment at Cherry Point" (referred to on the coalition's website as the "Economic Impact Study dated October 2014") report is featured on numerous pages of the WBA's Whatcom Coalition for Economic Growth project's website. There are footnotes referring to CEBR's report; there are buttons that link to the report; there are pages that explain some of WBA's version of the background of CEBR's 2019 report.

If you'd like to start with the highlights of *Searchlight Review's* new report, you can check out the Introduction, Executive Summary, and Conclusion sections of the report, along with an interactive photo slideshow containing screenshots of email records included in the full report, which are published on *Searchlight Review's* website. Click on the link provided below to view the December 10, 2019, post. Contained in that post is a link to a pdf copy of my full detailed report for your review.

<https://searchlightreview.com/2019/12/10/go-forth-and-generate-revenue-examining-public-records-related-to-the-center-for-economic-and-business-researchs-employment-at-cherry-point-reports/>

I hope that you may find the information contained in the report to be of interest and useful. It is also my hope that WWU will investigate what occurred with CEBR's production of its 2014 and 2019 "Employment at Cherry Point" reports in terms of what I outlined in my report, and that the information I presented might have an impact on how CEBR operates in the future.

I continue to offer my support for the currently proposed Cherry Point amendments to our County's comprehensive plan and code which are needed to adequately protect and prioritize the culturally and environmentally sensitive lands and waters at Cherry Point, known to the Lummi Nation as Xwe'chi'eXen.

Thank you.

Regards,

Sandy Robson