

My name is Michelle Smith and I have live in Bellingham for 16 years. I am a sustainability professional with 30 years experience working with local and global businesses. In my role I assess companies' ability to successfully mitigate environmental, social, health, and safety risks. I also support companies in their urgent move to a low carbon economy. I also passionately support environmentally relevant nonprofit organizations in our community. I feel honored to live in a place of such beauty and environmental significance.

Our cherry point industries are recognized as best in class for their regulatory compliance and environmental protection, valuing, like all those that live in this community, the beauty that is our immediate surroundings and the sacred commitment to protect it. We currently have a robust and appropriate mandatory environmental and social permitting and review process in Washington State that rigorously considers environmental, health, safety, marine, social, noise, economic, labor and livelihood impacts. This process is intended to take into account all the potential impacts raised by our community tonight. Washington state is recognized for its tough environmental regulations, and our local permitting process as it exists is actually quite effective; Ceasing the moratorium does not have to halt the continued work of the commission to update the comprehensive plan.

Cherry Point industries that are contributing in significant ways to the vibrant economy of Whatcom County. We are turning down an incredible opportunity to be a positive part of the low carbon economy transition that is happening globally, and that can be executed positively in our community.

The continued moratorium has done nothing but promote community divisiveness. I request that the county council cease the pattern of divisiveness and inaction and move to facilitate productive and collaborative discussions with the diverse voices in our community and be a material part of the low carbon economy transition. As we demonstrate our ability to engage productively with industry, other industries will be drawn to Whatcom County. If we continue to be poor partners with business, we will struggle to attract a diverse and robust economy base. Our reputation as a fair, collaborative, and innovative community will facilitate a positive future for Whatcom County.

In the interest of the long term sustainability of our community, I request that you discontinue the moratorium which serves no purpose other than to reinforce a reputation as a county that does not fairly support innovative business investment.