

GPT Facts and Impacts

IF THE PROPOSED GATEWAY PACIFIC TERMINAL (GPT) IS BUILT, EACH YEAR:

48 million metric tons of coal would be mined in Montana and Wyoming, loaded onto trains and transported over a thousand miles to Cherry Point where the coal would be dumped on the ground in huge uncovered stockpiles. The coal would then be loaded onto ships and sent through the San Juan Islands and Puget Sound to Asia (mostly China) to be burned.

THE COAL TRAINS

Coal trains are the heaviest, noisiest and most polluting trains because they release both diesel emissions and coal dust. If GPT is built:

- 18 GPT coal trains per day - 9 loaded and 9 unloaded – would travel through Ferndale 365 days a year (a GPT coal train potentially every 80 minutes of the night and day)
- Each train would have approximately 150 coal cars and be over 1.5 miles long.
- A loaded coal train weighs over 35 million pounds, needing 5 diesel locomotives. 18 GPT coal trains x 5 diesel locomotives = 90 additional diesel locomotives traveling through Ferndale every day
- Diesel engines produce toxic 2.5 micron diesel particulate emissions that are breathed deeply into the lungs
- According to BNSF, each coal car can lose as much as 500 pounds of toxic coal dust en route. Even empty coal cars release substantial coal dust emissions
- After studying the medical research, the American Lung Association and over 200 Whatcom County doctors concluded that there is no “safe threshold” of exposure to these toxins.
- Exposure to these toxins causes increased risk of cancer, cardiac and pulmonary problems including heart attacks, strokes, asthma, and impaired lung development in children and adolescents.
- Round-the-clock noise from diesel engines would cause inescapable noise pollution. Noise pollution causes cardiovascular disease including high blood pressure and strokes, cognitive impairment and lower academic achievement in children, sleep disturbance, and mental health problems.
- GPT’s 18 daily trains would block every railroad crossing on their route for up to 3 hours a day (10 minutes per train) preventing business vehicles, private passengers and emergency responders from being where they are needed.
- Over 200 Whatcom County doctors say, “In the modern medical era, a 5 to 10 minute delay in emergency medical service (EMS) response time can make the difference between life and death.”

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS

The closer people live, go to school, or work to the railroad tracks and/or the uncovered coal stockpiles, the greater the likelihood that their health and property value would be harmed. Those within 5 miles of the uncovered coal stockpiles or within 200 meters of the railroad track would have the greatest likelihood of suffering health problems.

- 3 Ferndale Schools are dangerously close to railroad track that GPT would use:
 - Ferndale High School campus (and athletic fields) is 220’ from the railroad track
 - Central Elementary is 650’ from the railroad track
 - Custer Elementary is 1200’ from the railroad track (and the “Custer Spur” where multiple trains would sit idling)
- 6 Ferndale Schools would be within 5 miles of GPT’s uncovered coal stockpiles:
 - Horizon Middle School, Vista Middle School, Cascadia Elementary School, Custer Elementary School, Eagleridge Elementary School, Skyline Elementary School

THE UNCOVERED COAL STOCKPILES

- GPT’s coal would be dumped at Cherry Point into **2 ½ miles of uncovered coal piles higher than a 6 story building, and all of it fully exposed to the wind and rain.**
- Coal stockpiles are prone to spontaneous combustion and release enormous amounts of coal dust. To reduce the risk of spontaneous combustion and amount of coal dust released, GPT would spray the coal stockpiles with up to 1.9 billion gallons of water annually. Even so, potentially 3 million pounds of coal dust per year would be released from uncovered coal stockpiles. Wind and rain could easily spread the coal dust for 5 miles or more.

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WATER USE

- GPT would use up to 5.33 million gallons of Nooksack River water supplied by the Public Utility District (PUD) each day/1.9 billion gallons per year. GPT's greatest water use would be during dry months when the Nooksack River is lowest.
- From 1974 to 2011 the City of Ferndale used PUD-supplied water from the Nooksack River. In 2012 Ferndale switched to well water which then required purchase and ongoing use of a costly nanofiltration system to treat the well water.
- If GPT is built, would Ferndale be able to access PUD-supplied Nooksack River water again in the future if well water becomes inadequate or contaminated?

THE COAL SHIPS

- Coal ships are among the biggest ships in the world (twice the size of oil tankers allowed in Washington State ports) and have the worst safety record of all commercial ships.
- Coal ships are too big to move in a single northbound or southbound traffic lane so they would have to move down the middle creating hazards and delays for other ships.
- If GPT is built, a coal ship would sail to, or depart from Cherry Point 974 times a year. Coal ships are not required to have a tug escort. Coal ships are powered by diesel engines burning bunker fuel stored in tanks holding up to 2 million gallons of fuel.
- After unloading coal and taking on up to 17,000,000 gallons of ballast water in Asia, the ships would sail back to GPT and discharge the ballast water. Ballast water from Asia potentially contains hundreds of different invasive species that would threaten native species of the Salish Sea.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

At full operation, GPT would provide only 257 permanent jobs and approximately \$11 million in annual state and local tax revenue. GPT would cost us far more:

- **GPT would threaten the safe operation of our existing Cherry Point industries, BP Refinery, Alcoa-Intalco, and Conoco Philips, and the jobs they now provide.** None of these 3 existing Cherry Point industries has endorsed GPT.
- In a 2011 lawsuit, BNSF testified that its studies proved that train derailments can be caused by coal dust from coal trains combining with water from extraordinary amounts of precipitation. GPT's coal trains would use the exact same track used by Cherry Point's crude oil and chemical trains and thereby increase the likelihood of the crude oil and chemical trains derailing and/or exploding.
- GPT's oversized coal ships, which have commercial shipping's worst safety record, would cause delays and hazards for all other ships and increase the likelihood of collisions and catastrophic accidents in our local waters.
- GPT would be just across the street (Aldergrove Rd) from BP Refinery. Each year millions of pounds of GPT's windblown coal dust from its 62 feet high uncovered coal stockpiles would continually deposit on BP structures, sensors, valves, etc. thus increasing the likelihood of malfunction and catastrophic accident occurring at BP.
- **GPT threatens the jobs and tax revenue provided by Whatcom County fishing and tourism industries.** These industries presently provide over 8,000 jobs. Tourism alone provides the county over \$7 million in tax revenue annually.
- **The law requires that BNSF pay only 5% of all costs for railroad overpass/underpass /street grid changes necessary to reduce traffic blockages at railroad crossings; we taxpayers pay the remaining 95%.** A single railroad overpass project can cost from \$25 million to \$75 million. The amount of taxes paid by GPT will not come close to covering the costs of the rail infrastructure needed in Washington State and Whatcom County if GPT is built.
- **Decreased property values.** Some Whatcom County realtors say buyers have already refused to consider purchasing some properties because of the *possibility* of GPT. GPT's impacts could decrease property value by 10% or more depending upon proximity to tracks and GPT's uncovered coal stockpiles.
- **Increased health care costs** for all sectors of the economy: Examples of typical health care costs are: \$4,900 average cost of treating one person for asthma for one year; \$39,891 average cost for treating one person for lung cancer; \$100,000 average cost of open heart surgery.