



**SKAGIT COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**RON WESEN, First District
KENNETH A. DAHLSTEDT, Second District
SHARON D. DILLON, Third District**

January 3, 2013

GPT/Custer Spur EIS Co-Lead Agencies
c/o CH2M Hill
1100 112th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Bellevue, WA 98004

RE: Gateway Pacific Terminal / Custer Spur EIS Scoping Comments

Greetings,

We write to provide comments and input relevant to the Gateway Pacific Terminal / Custer Spur EIS scoping (GPT EIS). Please make this comment letter part of the official record of this action.

We are concerned about the potential impact within Skagit County arising from additional coal trains along the main Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) freight line, which passes through Skagit County's urban core, bisecting the cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington. A portion of this line traverses at-grade street crossings throughout Skagit County, including streets connected to on-ramps and exits from Interstate 5. Among other things, we are concerned about:

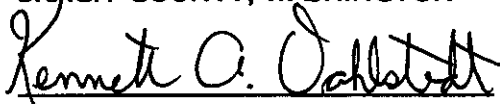
- Degradation of transportation levels of service in Skagit County, and the resultant implications under our State's Growth Management Act;
- Impacts to the community's transportation grid, including possible impacts on emergency access point as well as the economic impacts arising from substantially increased delay at BNSF crossings;

- Impacts to passenger rail service;
- Additional train traffic on the BNSF Bridge over the Skagit River that this proposal will occasion. The BNSF Bridge is an outdated structure that regularly creates backwater conditions during flood events, and has the potential to jeopardize the safety of Skagit County citizens.

Skagit County has a duty to ensure activities related to the project are done in a manner that does not threaten our irreplaceable environment and quality of life. In light of the foregoing, we request that the Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur EIS include within its scope a systemic analysis of potential impacts to Skagit County, including but not limited to regional transportation and economic impacts. Please make Skagit County a party of record to this action. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Chairman



Sharon D. Dillon, Commissioner



Ron Wesen, Commissioner

cc: Mayor Jill Boudreau (Mount Vernon)
Mayor Steve Sexton (Burlington)
Mayor Mike Anderson (Sedro-Woolley)
Mayor Dean Maxwell (Anacortes)
Mayor Ramon Hayes (La Conner)
Mayor Debbie Heinzman (Lyman)
Mayor Judd Wilson (Concrete)
Mayor Appoint, Town of Hamilton