

Handout @ 9/17/13  
TREE Mtg.  
Craig Cole

Remarks to King County Council TEEC

September 17, 2013

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this brief opportunity to appear before you.

My name is Craig Cole. I live in Bellingham and am a consultant to Seattle-based SSA Marine, which is the proponent of Gateway Pacific Terminal. I am a former King County resident and have spent a lot of time down here, serving on the Board of Regents of the UW, on the Board of Directors of Puget Sound Energy, and in other matters involving public service and business interests.

Gateway is proposed as a multi-commodity cargo handling facility to increase export capacity for US producers of dry bulk commodities, such as coal, grains, wood biofuels, and corn from across the northern tier states. These products underpin the economies of the west and midwest and support tens of thousands of jobs, but these states don't have ports to get their cargoes to market and the US Grains Council and other trade interests are calling for the additional efficient export capacity that this project would provide. All of which, of course, is consistent with one of our nation's most fundamental public policies: a constitutionally-protected system of interstate commerce that is of reciprocal benefit to all states. It is also why over one in three jobs in Washington is supported by interstate commerce and international trade. And there are many good reasons why we don't make national export and energy policy one state, county or village at a time.

Keep in mind that some of this US cargo, especially coal, now has to be, and is being, exported out of British Columbia ports, which are expanding. We want some of the trains that come through here now to take a left turn into a US port at Cherry Point instead of continuing on into Canada.

I was a member and chair of the Whatcom County Council when a compact between the state and county was forged to set aside the Cherry Point industrial area for water-dependent heavy industry. This has been reflected in decades of land use and shoreline plans. This project would be co-located in an existing industrial port area with two oil refineries and an aluminum smelter, on a 1500 acre site, 75% of which would remain in natural buffer. The project will be subjected to an unprecedented level of regulatory scrutiny by federal, state and local governments.

During construction, Gateway will generate in the region's economy 4400 jobs over two years of construction, and 1250 permanent jobs. We are talking about a lot of family wage jobs. This is the equivalent of eliminating 30% of the county's unemployment during construction and 12% on an on-going basis. About \$200 million will be contributed in state and local taxes over ten years.

Whatcom County's wages are a third less than yours. Poverty rates are about one and a half times yours, as is the rate of unemployment. But costs of living are 93% of Seattle's. This isn't a pretty picture for far too many families.

Whatcom County provides significant benefits to King County, and not without local costs and impacts. But we are all part of a shared regional economic system. For example, the electricity in this building, the gasoline in your cars, and the jet fuel at SeaTac were likely produced in Whatcom County. And

products and people being transported between King County and British Columbia pass through my town, because we share a common transportation infrastructure. You can see it on game days.

Most polls have shown that far more people in Washington support these port expansion projects than are opposed. That's because other counties want to develop their economies, too. And, just as you do, they need to utilize a common, trans-jurisdictional transportation network to safely transport lawful products. If this wasn't available, you couldn't dispose of your own garbage, which I am certain passes through many towns that would rather it didn't.

This project is already being subjected to an unprecedented scope of analysis. The standards being applied to this project have attracted much attention from the investment and industrial communities across the nation who expect them to become an impossible precedent by which future projects will be judged, opening the door to limitless litigation whenever a citizen opposes something. Yes—even including analyzing the global environmental impacts of the end-use of any product that we produce that is used abroad, whether it be airplanes or trucks or something else. It is perceived by some that Washington may simply be getting out of the business of industrial growth.

Whether you agree with this or not, one should at least acknowledge that there is an orderly process under state and federal environmental laws for gathering and analyzing facts before reaching conclusions. Facts and hard science, rather than emotion and politics, are the bases of this process.

The proposed resolution contains factual inaccuracies. As a county that should understand the principles of trade and interstate commerce as well as anyone, we ask that you act thoughtfully, withhold premature judgment, and respect the process.

Thank you.

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