

A Resolution Regarding the Proposed Gateway Pacific Coal Terminal at Cherry Point

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4 **WHEREAS** a marine terminal, the “Gateway Pacific Terminal”, has been proposed for
5 development at Cherry Point on the US mainland northwest of Bellingham and 10 miles
6 north of Orcas Island, by Pacific International Terminals, Inc., a subsidiary of SSA
7 Marine, which would provide storage and handling for up to 54 million metric tons of
8 commodities per year, primarily coal from Wyoming and Montana;

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10 **WHEREAS** this coal would be transported in open rail cars on trains more than a mile
11 long, measuring a total of about 30 miles daily, with substantial exposure to coal dust
12 and train diesel fumes along the route, and the increased train traffic from coal trains is
13 likely to interfere with existing key Washington industries that rely on rail to move
14 parts and products;

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16 **WHEREAS** there are potentially significant health impacts of this project, including
17 respiratory illness, noise exposure from train whistles, mercury and heavy metal
18 pollution, and potential to delay emergency medical responses and increase vehicle-
19 train accidents along the train route;

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21 **WHEREAS** coal from these miles of open rail cars would be offloaded onto bulk
22 carriers, heavy polluters of diesel fuel, and which have historically had a high rate of
23 structural failures and safety incidents, and oil spills from these ships would be
24 devastating to our marine environment;

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26 **WHEREAS** if the project is approved, there will be a stockyard at Cherry Point 80 to 105
27 acres in area for storage of uncovered piles of coal which must be rotated regularly to
28 avoid spontaneous combustion;

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30 **WHEREAS** the proposed terminal would be adjacent to the Cherry Point Aquatic
31 Reserve, so designated to protect an important native ecosystem, and the release of coal
32 dust, which is difficult to control, would endanger eelgrass beds and herring, a
33 keystone species that provides food for Chinook salmon, sea lions, porpoises, and
34 indirectly, orca whales which feed on salmon;

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36 **WHEREAS** degradation of areas with high levels of recreational boating would
37 decrease economic support for the surrounding coastal communities from recreational
38 boating and fishing, while sustainable improvements to our marine environment will
39 increase commercial fishing-related employment, historically an important source of
40 income for our Puget Sound communities;

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42 **WHEREAS** substantially increased ship traffic from bulk carriers may delay ferry
43 crossings in north Puget Sound, especially in bad weather, affecting the work
44 opportunities of residents who commute by ferry;

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46 **WHEREAS** most jobs created by this project would be temporary construction jobs,
47 creating the opposite of a stable and sustainable economy, and while the estimated
48 permanent jobs created by this project would number 2 to 4 hundred, the project may
49 have a net negative offset to the currently projected 10,000 jobs that will come to
50 Washington in the next 10 years if environmentally degrading projects such as the one
51 described here are avoided;

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53 **WHEREAS** fossil fuels burned anywhere in the world contribute to global climate
54 change, and China, the planned destination for the millions of metric tons of coal, is
55 already a frontrunner in the production of solar energy products and should be
56 encouraged to use sustainable energy practices; and

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58 **WHEREAS** one purpose of government is to regulate commerce to protect the
59 environment, health, and livelihoods of our people, as clearly stated in the Washington
60 State Democratic Platform, while the proposed terminal and its associated activities
61 would make large profits for a few large corporations at the expense of the people of
62 Washington;

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64 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic Party urges
65 Congressman Rick Larsen, Senator Patty Murray, Senator Maria Cantwell, the Governor
66 of Washington, and Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark to strongly oppose
67 the proposed terminal; and

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69 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic
70 Party recommends that in light of the many known and expected adverse effects of the
71 proposed Pacific Gateway Terminal on our environment, health, and economy, that its
72 development not be allowed to proceed.

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75 Submitted by the San Juan County Democrats to the Washington State Democratic
76 Central Committee for consideration at its June 2, 2012 Convention. (Date Submitted
77 5/3/2012)

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79 Recommended 'PASS' by the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Economic Justice and
80 Development, Energy and the Environment, and Transportation at its May 12th meeting
81 in Ellensburg.

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83 Recommended 'PASS' by the Platform Committee at its June 1st meeting in Seattle.

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85 'PASSED' by the Washington State Democratic Convention at its June 2nd meeting in
86 Seattle.