

RESOLUTION NO. 2012-22

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT CERTAIN POTENTIAL ON AND OFF-SITE IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GATEWAY PACIFIC TERMINAL BE ANALYZED AS PART OF THE SEPA AND NEPA PROCESSES

WHEREAS, Pacific International Terminals, Ltd. has proposed the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) at Cherry Point for the shipment of up to 54 million metric tons of various dry bulk commodities including coal to foreign locations; and

WHEREAS, these bulk commodities will arrive at the GPT via trains that are proposed to travel through the City of Bellingham; and

WHEREAS, the length, number and frequency of these freight trains are likely to increase over time as the GPT phases construction towards full build-out, which may require construction of additional off-site rail infrastructure improvements within the City of Bellingham; and

WHEREAS, these bulk commodities will then leave the GPT via ship in approximately 9 bulk carriers per week for an estimated total of 487 per year, and the projected shipping route is through the San Juan Islands to GPT and then north along the coast of Vancouver Island, the coast of Alaska and through the Aleutian Islands, generally following the migratory route of wild salmon; and

WHEREAS, risk of spills and ship collisions increase with an additional 487 single-hulled bulk carriers per year and a diesel or bunker fuel spill will be catastrophic to Puget Sound and Bellingham Bay and harmful to industry, tourism, fisheries and our quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the increase in freight trains and/or additional infrastructure improvements within the City of Bellingham and the increase in shipping due to the GPT project is likely to compromise the City's ability to continue to achieve its Legacies and Strategic Commitments (the "Legacies") which were adopted by the Bellingham City Council on July 13, 2009 to set forth City goals and strategic commitments to support those goals; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham aligns all of its actions with the Legacies including: protection of Bellingham Bay, land use planning, capital facilities planning for trail and park systems, multi-modal circulation and utility system upgrades, as well as providing reliable emergency services; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham has a variety of boards and commissions that also contribute to achieving the Legacies, such as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Greenway Advisory Committee, Tourism Commission, Transportation Commission and the Waterfront Advisory Group; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham anticipates that the GPT and its associated freight train traffic, the potential for off-site infrastructure improvements within the City, and the shipping impacts to Puget Sound, will have direct negative impacts to the Legacies; and

WHEREAS, the GPT and associated increased freight trains, potential construction of a new rail siding, and increase in ocean shipping may undermine the City of Bellingham's "Healthy Environment" Legacy by negatively impacting the ecologic functions of Bellingham Bay, by contributing to climate change and air quality degradation through increased coal dust and diesel engine particulate emissions, by increasing consumption of natural resources through the export of coal, by harming runs of wild salmon that originate in or travel through our waters, and by increasing ocean acidification resulting in a decline in production by local shellfish producers; and

WHEREAS, the GPT and associated increased freight trains, increased train noise, potential siding, and increased shipping impacts may undermine the City's "Vibrant Sustainable Economy" Legacy by creating conditions that discourage public and private investment; decrease values of properties located along the rail line or located waterward of it; cut off the newly developing Waterfront District by creating significant problems with noise, traffic blockage, air pollution and safety, thereby putting at risk millions of public dollars, thousands of potential jobs and additions to the productive tax base; deter a thriving tourist economy by negatively affecting the image and reality of Bellingham as a "green" destination; pollute Bellingham Bay; harm commercial and sport fishing industries; and disable the interdependence of environmental, economic and social interests; and

WHEREAS, the GPT and associated freight trains, potential siding, and potential increase in vessel traffic in Bellingham Bay may undermine the City's "Sense of Place" Legacy by severely limiting access to open space to such iconic places as Taylor Dock, Boulevard Park and the soon to be developed Cornwall Beach Park and by disrupting access to our public waters for sailing regattas and other recreational uses; and

WHEREAS, the GPT and associated freight trains, potential siding, and resulting blocked crossings may undermine the City's "Safe & Prepared Community" Legacy by preventing rapid response to emergencies and crime; and

WHEREAS, the GPT and associated increased freight trains, potential siding, and increased vessel traffic may undermine the City's "Mobility & Connectivity Options" Legacy by closing off at-grade crossings, blocking access to multi-modal trails and other infrastructure, disrupting non-bulk commodity vessels in Bellingham Bay, and disabling the well-connected mobility options, such as passenger train service the City of Bellingham strives to maintain and to increase; and

WHEREAS, the GPT and associated increased freight trains and potential siding may undermine the City's "Quality, Responsive City Services" Legacy by reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of the City Fire and Police Departments; and

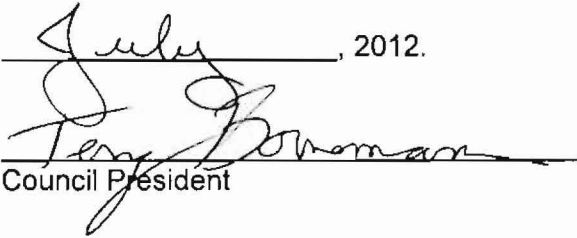
WHEREAS, the GPT and associated increased freight trains and potential siding may undermine the City's "Equity and Social Justice" Legacy by decreasing opportunities for living wage employment as economic investment may decrease due to the GPT project impacts to the environment and access to amenities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM THAT:

1. The City of Bellingham supports the Washington State Department of Ecology May 7, 2012 request that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conduct a Cumulative Impact Analysis under NEPA, of all currently proposed Coal export facilities and/or dry-bulk commodity terminals within Washington and Oregon.
2. In addition to the Cumulative Impact Analysis specified above, the City of Bellingham requests a project specific EIS to evaluate the full range of potential cumulative and unique impacts of the GPT project, on the City of Bellingham including off-site infrastructure improvements that may be required now or in the foreseeable future.
3. If offsite infrastructure improvements are required within Bellingham city limits, the City of Bellingham requests that they shall not be included as mitigation, but rather as a part of the GPT project.
4. If a rail siding is required within Bellingham city limits, the City of Bellingham requests that it shall not block or disrupt access to our parks or our waterfront.
5. The City of Bellingham requests that costs for the required mitigation for potential negative impacts as specified above shall not be borne by Bellingham residents.
6. The City of Bellingham requests that a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment be conducted by a separate and qualified third party contractor in order to analyze potential impacts to the health and welfare of the citizens of Bellingham including impacts from diesel emissions from trains and ships, coal dust, noise and the potential for increased rail/car and rail/pedestrian accidents.
7. The City of Bellingham requests an analysis of the transportation impacts to at-grade rail/street crossings including the delays to traffic and emergency vehicle response time and impacts to passenger rail traffic at full build out.
8. The City of Bellingham requests an analysis of the economic impacts to public and private entities resulting from any potential spill on land or water during transport, storage, or handling, including any spill due to a ship collision.

9. The City of Bellingham requests that probable anchorages be included in any vessel traffic analyses prepared for GPT, with an assessment of the likelihood of vessels anchoring in Bellingham Bay.

PASSED by the Council this 23rd day of July, 2012.


Council President

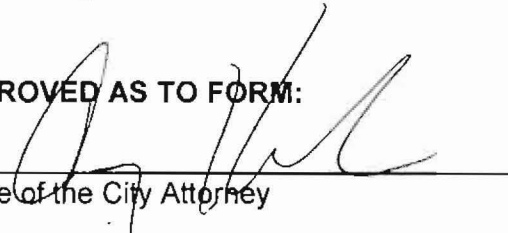
APPROVED by me this 27th day of July, 2012.


Mayor

ATTEST:


Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Office of the City Attorney

A Resolution of the City of Bellingham, Washington

Resolution No. 2012-22
Agenda Bill No. AB 19618
Final Passage 7/23/2012
Published (if applicable)

CC Legal Secretary
Executive Assistant to City Council
Other: