



News Release

Joint news release:

**Whatcom County, Washington Dept. of Ecology, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Sept. 21, 2012**

***Scoping begins Sept. 24 for proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal EIS
Agencies seek input before reviewing Cherry Point export terminal
proposal***

BELLINGHAM –The public is invited to comment on the scope of an environmental impact statement (EIS) that three agencies plan to jointly prepare for a proposed bulk-cargo shipping terminal and rail spur improvements at Cherry Point.

Whatcom County, the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) are together conducting the EIS process for the proposed terminal projects and will jointly produce one EIS. Whatcom County and Ecology must follow the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and the Corps must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Pacific International Terminals, a subsidiary of SSA Marine Inc. (SSA), proposes to build and operate the Gateway Pacific Terminal between Ferndale and Blaine. The terminal would provide storage and handling of exported and imported dry bulk commodities, including coal, grain, iron ore, salts and alumina. BNSF Railway Inc. proposes to add rail facilities and install a second track along the six-mile Custer Spur.

A 120-day comment period for the NEPA/SEPA EIS scoping process will begin Sept. 24, 2012, and end Jan. 21, 2013.

Through scoping, the agencies will decide what impacts to analyze in the EIS. The three lead agencies will ask other agencies, tribes and the public to comment on what impacts the EIS should address. After considering comments, the lead agencies will decide what should be included in the EIS.

Further phases include researching and preparing the draft and final EIS.

People can view information about the proposed projects and comment at any time during the 120-day comment period:

- Via the official website established by the three agencies for the EIS process: www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov.
- By email: comments@eisgatewaypacificwa.gov.
- By mail: GPT/Custer Spur EIS, 1100 112th Ave. NE, Suite 400, Bellevue, WA 98004.

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The lead agencies also will host seven scoping meetings, which will include information on the proposed projects, staff available to answer questions, and opportunities to provide oral or written comments. There will be no formal presentation, and people may arrive and leave as they choose during the meeting hours.

Meetings are set for these dates and locations:

- **Bellingham:** Saturday, Oct. 27, 2012; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Squalicum High School, 3773 E. McLeod Road
- **Friday Harbor:** Saturday, Nov. 3, 2012; noon to 3 p.m.; Friday Harbor High School, 45 Blair Ave.
- **Mount Vernon:** Monday, Nov. 5, 2012; 4 to 7 p.m.; McIntyre Hall, 2501 E. College Way
- **Seattle:** Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2012; 4 to 7 p.m.; North Seattle Community College, 9600 College Way N.
- **Ferndale:** Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012; 3 to 7 p.m.; Ferndale Events Center, 5715 Barrett Road
- **Spokane:** Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2012; 4 to 7 p.m.; Spokane County Fairgrounds, 404 N. Havana St., Spokane Valley
- **Vancouver:** Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2012; 4 to 7 p.m.; Clark College, Gaiser Student Center, 1933 Fort Vancouver Way

The official website, www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov, provides additional details about the scoping process and meetings, and will display the comments received. The site's full set of features will go on line at about midnight on Sept. 24, 2012.

The joint NEPA/SEPA EIS process enables the co-lead agencies to avoid duplicated efforts where the two laws overlap, while meeting each statute's separate requirements. Parts of the joint EIS process described on the website apply to both statutes and parts apply to one or the other.

In scoping, the lead agencies seek comments that will guide their decision on how the EIS will address:

- A reasonable range of alternatives for the proposals.
- Potentially affected resources and the extent to which the EIS should analyze those resources.
- Identifying significant unavoidable adverse impacts.
- Measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate effects caused by the proposals.

The scoping process does not address whether the proposal should receive permits. Scoping only helps define what will be studied in the EIS. Decisions about issuing permits to construct the proposed projects will not be made until after the EIS is complete.

Later in 2013, after the comment period, the lead agencies will issue a scoping report and begin work on a draft EIS, which may take at least a year to prepare. The lead agencies will seek public comment on the draft EIS, and then produce a final NEPA/SEPA EIS.

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For more information:

Official website for the Gateway Pacific Terminal/Custer Spur EIS and scoping process:
www.eisgatewaypacificwa.gov

Ecology's Gateway Pacific Terminal page: www.ecy.wa.gov/geographic/gatewaypacific

Whatcom County's Gateway Pacific Terminal page:
www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/plan/current/gpt-ssa/index.jsp

Washington Office of Regulatory Assistance: <http://iprmt.ora.wa.gov/> *requires registration*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District: www.nws.usace.army.mil

Ecology's website: www.ecy.wa.gov

Ecology's social media: www.ecy.wa.gov/about/newmedia.html

Broadcast version:

County, state and federal officials have asked for public comment on the scope of an environmental impact statement – or E-I-S – for a proposed cargo terminal and rail branch line at Cherry Point in Whatcom County. The proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal would export coal and other bulk goods.

The county, state Ecology department and U-S Army Corps of Engineers say the four-month comment period will help outline the issues to cover in the E-I-S.

People can participate on-line. Also, the three agencies will host seven meetings around the state.

A draft E-I-S may take at least year to prepare.

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