



October 4, 2016

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Washington State Department of Ecology  
Northwest Regional Office  
3190 160th Avenue SE  
Bellevue, WA 98008

Dear Interested Parties, Jurisdictions, Tribes, and Agencies:

Skagit County and the Washington State Department of Ecology (the co-lead agencies) are pleased to present the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the proposed Shell Anacortes Rail Unloading Facility. Equilon Enterprises, LLC, dba Shell (the Applicant), is proposing to construct and operate a crude-by-rail unloading facility at the existing Shell Puget Sound Refinery (PSR) in Anacortes, Washington.

Under the Proposed Action, the Applicant would build a rail spur from the existing BNSF Railway Anacortes Subdivision onto the Shell PSR property to accommodate trains transporting crude oil from the Bakken region of Montana and North Dakota. Each unit train arriving at the rail unloading facility would carry approximately 60,000 to 70,000 barrels of crude oil. The facility would receive six unit trains per week, with each train having up to 102 tank cars. The proposed project would not result in a change in refining capacity of the Shell PSR.

The Draft EIS has been prepared in accordance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and Skagit County Code. The purpose of the Draft EIS is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of constructing and operating the Proposed Action.

During the Draft EIS scoping phase, we identified areas of concern associated with the Proposed Action that are subsequently addressed in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS evaluates the potential impacts from construction and operation of the Proposed Action, including activities such as rail transportation and wetland impacts. The Draft EIS also evaluates the contribution of the Proposed Action to cumulative environmental impacts. In addition to the Proposed Action, the Draft EIS evaluates a no action alternative.

The following resource areas were evaluated in the Draft EIS:

- Earth Resources
- Groundwater
- Surface Water
- Fish and Aquatic Species and Habitat
- Wetlands
- Vegetation and Terrestrial Wildlife
- Cultural Resources
- Treaty and Traditionally Used Resources
- Noise and Vibration
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Land Use and Social Elements
- Visual Resources
- Economics
- Rail Traffic and Transportation
- Vehicle Traffic and Transportation
- Public Services and Incident Response
- Environmental Health and Risk

The Draft EIS identifies potential mitigation measures to address potentially significant adverse environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. In some cases, implementation of mitigation measures would reduce but not completely eliminate the significant adverse impacts. These impacts are identified in the Draft EIS as unavoidable and significant adverse impacts. Potential unavoidable and significant adverse environmental impacts are identified for the following resource areas: noise, rail transportation, vehicle transportation, and environmental health and risk.

Comments on this Draft EIS will be accepted during the 60-day comment period (October 4 through December 2, 2016).

Comments received on the Draft EIS during the comment period will be compiled, reviewed, and considered. A final environmental impact statement (Final EIS) will be prepared. The co-lead agencies anticipate the Final EIS to be published in 2017. The Final EIS may be used by local and state agencies to inform permit decisions for the Proposed Action. Seven days following publication of the Final EIS, permits for the Proposed Action may be issued based on the regulatory requirements for each permit process. Construction of the Proposed Action could begin in 2017.

Thank you for your interest in the Shell Anacortes Rail Unloading Facility environmental review process.

Sincerely,

Dale Pernula, AICP, Planning Director, Skagit County

Date: 10/4/2016 Signature: 

Josh Baldi, Northwest Regional Director, Washington State Department of Ecology

Date: 10/4/2016 Signature: 