



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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December 29, 2011

Whatcom Docs Physicians
PO Box 4444
Bellingham, WA 98227-4444

Re: Gateway Pacific – Environmental Health Concerns

Dear Whatcom Physicians:

Thank you for your email of December 2, 2011, to Governor Gregoire regarding a Health Impact Assessment on the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal project in Ferndale. The Governor's Office asked the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to respond to your email.

We appreciate hearing what questions and concerns the public has regarding the proposed SSA Gateway Pacific Terminal project. In 2012, the environmental review of the project will begin with the scoping process for the Environmental Impact Statement. At that time, the co-lead agencies will conduct a public comment period and public meetings to formally hear from the public, citizen groups, tribes, local government, and state and federal agencies on what to include in the environmental analysis. Environmental rules under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) require us to wait until the public scoping process is complete and the public comment period closes before we make final decisions on the scope of the analysis. A decision whether to require a Health Impacts Assessment would occur at that stage and the assessment would be a part of the SEPA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Statement.

Please be assured that Ecology, as a SEPA Co-Lead agency, has already alerted and met with other state agencies representatives to emphasize the importance of their input and participation in the SEPA/NEPA process for this project. This contact includes the Washington State Department of Health. We will certainly consult with them when determining what information is needed to evaluate the range of possible health impacts associated with this project.

We will retain all input received from the public, local government, tribes, business, and others prior to initiation of the scoping process, but it will be important to provide formal comments during the comment period as well. If you have not already done so, I would recommend connecting with Whatcom County, the administrative SEPA Co-Lead, to be listed as an interested party to receive scoping, comment periods, and other SEPA/NEPA information. We also have additional information on our Ecology Gateway Pacific Terminal Project link in our website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/geographic/gatewayapacific/>. We are just in the process of updating it to be responsive to questions we are now receiving.

Thank you again for your email. If you have any questions related to the Department of Health, please contact Peggy Johnson at peggy.johnson@doh.wa.gov or (360) 236-3053. Questions for Ecology can be directed to Alice Kelly at alice.kelly@ecy.wa.gov or (425) 649-7128.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Summerhays
Regional Director

cc: Stu Clark, Air Quality Program Manager, Department of Ecology

