

November 29, 2012

To: The Army Corps of Engineers
Washington State Department of Ecology
Whatcom County

RE: Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT)/Custer Spur Project EIS Review

Greetings:

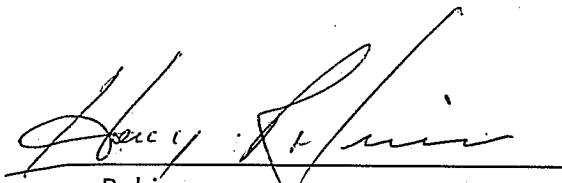
The undersigned are the Mayors of the six incorporated areas of Whatcom County outside of Bellingham. Our cities, and their surrounding areas, represent a substantial proportion of the region's population, as well as significant social and economic diversity. We join together in our individual capacities as elected officials to urge your consideration of the following matters in examining this project:

- 1) The project should be subjected to the customary, project-specific environmental review, under law, facts and science, to allow it to come to fruition in a manner that is timely and compatible with good environmental practice.
- 2) Whatcom County has a rate of poverty (15%) that exceeds state and national averages and wage rates and per capita income that also lag the state and nation. Over the years, higher wage industrial employment has been replaced with lower paying service sector jobs. Yet our cost of living is well above the national average and just slightly lower than in Seattle. (Please see the attached information presented to the Washington State Senate Environment Committee on October 1, 2012 by Dr. Hart Hodges of the Center for Economic and Business Research at Western WA University.)
- 3) The existing Cherry Point industries have been increasingly good neighbors and corporate citizens over time, but their future viability cannot be assumed or taken for granted. The permitting agencies should recognize the importance of new and diversified job growth within the Cherry Point heavy industrial area as essential to a healthy and sustainable regional economy.
- 4) The Cherry Point heavy industrial area has long been recognized in public policy as the appropriate site for additional shoreline-dependent industrial activity, including a fourth shipping pier. These policies are the result of decades of study and deliberate environmental, land use, shoreline, and economic planning.
- 5) The project would generate badly needed high wage jobs, as well as tax revenues to support essential governmental services.

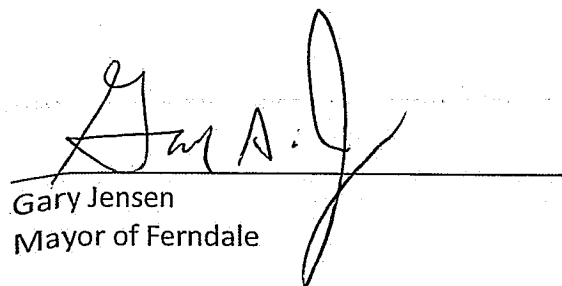
- 6) The project's potential to expand U.S. export capacity through a domestic port, capturing the consequent economic and trade benefits, should be examined.
- 7) All parts of Washington must have beneficial access to the transportation infrastructure of ports and waterways, rail systems, roads, highways and airports in order to facilitate job production and commerce. It would be inequitable for major population centers to utilize transportation infrastructure capacity for their own needs, while seeking to deny it to other communities.
- 8) We are a nation of laws. Permitting agencies are objective administrators and should not interfere with the lawful conduct of commerce based upon extra-legal political considerations or biases, such as the popularity of specific commodities in the opinion of certain citizens or interest groups.

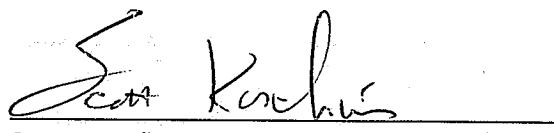
We respectfully encourage your consideration of the above.

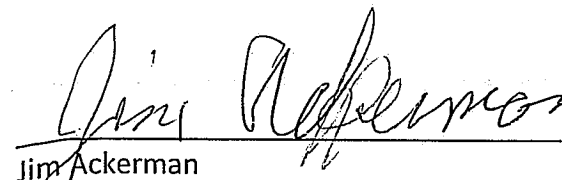
Sincerely,

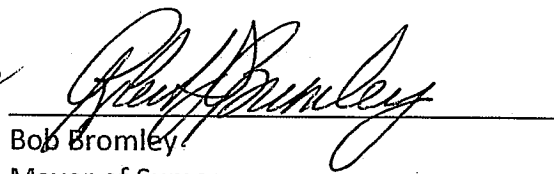

Harry Robinson
Mayor of Blaine


John Perry
Mayor of Everson


Gary Jensen
Mayor of Ferndale


Scott Korthuis
Mayor of Lynden


Jim Ackerman
Mayor of Nooksack


Bob Bromley
Mayor of Sumas