

ALLIANCE FOR  
**NORTHWEST JOBS & EXPORTS**

**Gateway Scoping Meetings**

**LAURI HENNESSEY, ALLIANCE FOR NORTHWEST JOBS AND EXPORTS**

My name is Lauri Hennessey. I'm here representing the Alliance for Northwest Jobs & Exports, a coalition of more than 40 organizations (and growing) across Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. Those organizations stand for nearly 220,000 employees and 39,000 businesses.

Our Alliance includes trade associations, unions, companies and individuals. It is a non-partisan group funded by our membership and representing a broad spectrum of interests including labor and business and Democrats and Republicans. While our Alliance supports all the proposed shipping projects, at their various stages of development, I do not speak for the individual projects.

On a personal note, while today I live in the Puget Sound area today, I was born in Everson and attended Western. My grandfather was a Senator from Whatcom County for more than 30 years, one who came here from Sweden and became a successful potato farmer. But times have changed. I know Whatcom County. I am well aware of the economic hardships it has experienced the past few years and how that has translated into flat or declining revenues to fund government services.

To address this crisis, policy-makers, unions and businesses are all working hard to promote policies that put people back to work. Over the long-term, putting people back to work is also the best solution to rebuilding the foundation of our fractured tax base. Different parts of Washington are pursuing different strategies to restore economic growth and opportunity – with each playing to its respective strengths and working to take full advantage of its assets.

One of the most important and valuable assets is our position on the Pacific Rim and our export economy – in fact, four out of every ten jobs in Washington State is reliant on trade. Another one of our strengths are our port facilities and the related transportation infrastructure that moves commodities and products effectively in and out of those port facilities. And, two years ago President

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Obama, recognizing the critical role exports can play in driving America's economic recovery, promised to double U.S. exports over the next five years, which he estimated could create 2 million jobs. In other words, expanding our export economy is vital to our regional and national economic recovery.

The proposed bulk export shipping terminals will provide an important short and long term boost to our regional economy and create much-needed jobs right here in Whatcom County. These proposals will create thousands of good, family-wage jobs in construction trades, transportation, manufacturing and trade -- blue collar jobs and white collar jobs. The terminals will boost a variety of commodities, including grain, and yes, including coal.

As important, each export proposal should and will undergo careful environmental review by the professional regulators – state and federal – to ensure compliance with existing laws. From the construction of new export terminals to the safe transportation of the coal, these projects will meet or exceed all existing environmental and safety standards. We believe these projects can bring jobs and revenue to our region and be done right, with rigorous review by government regulators and a commitment to the environmental stewardship that is so much a part of our heritage.

But, as a state with unemployment above the national average and that is routinely forced to cut funding for schools, we urge policy-makers at all levels of government, not to put up new road blocks to the hundreds of middle class jobs and millions in tax revenues that coal exports can bring to this county.

Let's be clear. If we don't build the export terminals here, the jobs, tax benefits – and yes the demand for coal energy – won't disappear, they will all just go someplace else. Done right, done the Northwest way, these projects will mean greater economic opportunity and security for Whatcom County, while also ensuring each project follows the highest standards we have set as a state and nation.

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There was a time, years ago when as a society we may have lacked the understanding, technology and shared commitment to achieve both a strong economy and a clean and safe environment. But, regardless of how you feel about coal exports, I hope we can all agree that those days are behind us. Today, thanks to advances in technology, tough environmental laws and procedures, best practices from businesses and workers alike and – yes – robust public oversight like this hearing today, we can achieve both a clean environment and a growing economy.

Our Alliance slogan is displayed prominently today on tshirts, on bumper stickers, and on flyers: it is very accurate today. Build Terminals Here. Build Jobs Here.