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If you care about the Salish Sea, you should oppose the Gateway Pacific Coal Terminal (GPT).

Seattle-based SSA Marine proposes to build North America's largest coal export terminal in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve near Bellingham, WA. Exporting 48 million tons of coal as proposed requires **974 transits of giant bulk carriers** every year. These ships, twice the size of the oil tankers currently allowed to call on Washington ports, have the worst safety records of any commercial vessels. They would significantly add to oil spill risks in the region since they carry up to two million gallons of bunker fuel, suffer from poor maneuverability, are not required to have tug escorts, and would join the increasingly congested waterways of Rosario and Haro straits.

The problems start with construction

During construction of GPT, the marine life that call Cherry Point home would experience sea-floor disturbance and increased turbidity, noise from pile driving and seismic surveys, and lighting – an attractive nuisance. But during operations after construction, shading from the pier and wharf, toxics from the terminal's outfall pipes, night lighting, and noise from vessel operations would impact species at Cherry Point year after year. Of particular concern: coal dust in the marine environment.

“Dust is the enemy”

The Westshore coal export terminal in Delta, BC loses **over 1.5 million pounds of coal dust a year** into the surrounding marine environment while shipping 24 million tons of coal. According to the facility manager, “Dust is the enemy.” The proposed terminal for Cherry Point would ship twice as much coal from the same footprint, just a few hundred yards from sensitive marine habitat in a high-wind area.

Coal dust and the high PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) it includes would be the nail in the coffin for the Cherry Point Pacific herring. Since 1970, Cherry Point herring have declined from 17,000 tons of spawning biomass to less than 1,000 tons. These small fish play a big role in the health of the Puget

Sound ecosystem - they are a linchpin in the food chain that includes **endangered Chinook salmon, migratory seabirds, and Southern Resident orcas**. Herring eggs and larvae are acutely sensitive to the impacts of PAHs.



A slow speed oil spill

At Cherry Point itself, toxics entering the water from the states' two largest oil refineries are already like a slow oil spill. How much will that accelerate with a massive increase in deep-draft vessels (974 transits a year), each of which carries up to two million gallons of bunker fuel for their own power, and receives coal and fuel transferred over water? The sheer number of bulk carriers creates multiple risks:

Rosario Strait already sees in excess of **700 tankers**, with Haro Strait exposed to over **100 loaded tar sands crude tankers** and hundreds more **bulk carrier and container ships**. Tankers in Haro Strait may nearly triple if the Kinder-Morgan tar sands pipeline to Vancouver, BC expands as planned.

Increasing conflicts between docking vessels and fishing boats during terminal operations, given both increased ship traffic and an exclusion zone for the dock.

Ferries crossing Rosario and Haro straits will experience **increased delays**.

An **oil spill or collision** becomes much more likely as congestion increases.



Whale and dolphin communications will be increasingly disrupted by the high-intensity low-frequency noise from the carriers.

Trading coal for pollution

In return for our coal, we get back two kinds of problems: **invasive species** and **air pollution**. The largest ships bring up to 17,000,000 gallons of ballast water infested with non-native, invasive aquatic species from the western Pacific, including toxic dinoflagellates that increase the risk of harmful algal blooms that lead to paralytic shellfish poisoning. These ships can also bring Chinese mitten crabs, Asian tunicates, Japanese eelgrass, and other invasive species that have the ability to severely disrupt the Salish Sea's ecosystem. With minimal inspection for ballast exchange and exemptions for bad weather it is guaranteed that millions of gallons of foreign ballast water will be discharged into the Salish Sea every year.

And it's not just invasive species—we also get **back mercury pollution** and the **climate impacts** that burning 48 million tons of coal every year, year after year, would create. Carbon dioxide also dramatically contributes to **ocean acidification**, a problem already jeopardizing the fabric of the marine food web.

We have a choice.

Go to PowerPastCoal.org to find out what **you** can do to protect Puget Sound from this imminent threat.

POWER PAST COAL
communities against coal export