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Gateway Pacific Terminal Scoping Summary Conveys Broad Brush of Possible Impacts from Proposed Northwest Coal Export

Summary underscores unprecedented participation and concerns regarding coal export

Whatcom County, WA—Earlier today, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Washington Department of Ecology, and Whatcom County Planning and Development Services released a lengthy summary of the more than 124,000 comments submitted to agencies in a public effort to guide the content of the proposed Gateway Pacific coal terminal's environmental assessment (EIS). They expect to release their decision on the scope of the EIS in the coming months.

The recently-concluded EIS scoping process for the proposed coal export terminal drew unprecedented participation, with over 9,000 individuals attending one of seven scoping hearings around the state, and another 16,000 individuals writing in-depth comments on topics of special concern. Stretching to 140 pages, this report in its length and content reflects remarkable participation from Northwest residents, businesses, ranchers, farmers, public health officials, faith leaders, tribal governments and elected officials.

“The Power Past Coal coalition will review this document thoroughly in the coming days,” stated Matt Krogh, North Sound Baykeeper at RE Sources for Sustainable Communities. “The level of engagement on this ill-proposed project is a testament to the importance of making sure a thorough and comprehensive review of this project and those proposed elsewhere is conducted. “

Recent reports of large volumes of coal accumulating in the Columbia River and Puget Sound along current coal trafficking routes underscore the critical need for a thorough Cherry Point environmental assessment, plus a need for an area-wide EIS that would address the combined impacts of all the

proposed terminals, should they be built. There are currently four proposals—two in WA and two in OR—on the table. Two other proposals, at Coos Bay, OR and Grays Harbor, WA have either been derailed due to lack of project developers or shelved by proponents with the news about Coos Bay breaking earlier on 4/1/13.

The area-wide EIS is critical enough for Governors Kitzhaber and Inslee to recently pen a letter calling on the federal government to take into serious consideration the impacts and consequences of coal export throughout the Northwest.

According to Cesia Kearns of the Sierra Club, "We need our federal delegation and other decision-makers to ensure federal agencies like the Army Corps of Engineers follow through on this and protect Northwest communities from the harms posed by toxic coal exports"

If built, the terminal at Cherry Point would be the largest coal export terminal in North America, facilitating Peabody Energy's efforts to export publicly owned coal from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming and Montana. The Gateway Pacific terminal would result in up to 18 coal trains per day traveling through WA, MT and ID and nearly 1,000 giant coal ship transits per year through the Salish Sea. The proponents of the terminal include Peabody Energy, SSA Marine, Burlington Northern-Santa Fe, and Goldman Sachs.

The report cites concerns from citizens at all seven hearings including elected officials, agency officials, and tribal members.

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POWER PAST COAL is an ever-growing alliance of health, environmental, businesses, clean-energy, faith and community groups working to stop coal export off the West Coast. Visit PowerPastCoal.org for more information.