

Cherry Point: How we can limit fossil fuel risks and impacts

Changes to land-use code this fall will affect your family's safety, and you can make a difference! Oil companies have gotten a free pass in Whatcom County for over 60 years, getting major permits approved with inadequate environmental review and safety requirements — putting our communities and waterways at risk of dangerous oil spills and train explosions. **Whatcom County has kicked off its process for taking public input** on the code amendments, and it's critical for the community (you!) to get involved!



Why we need more protective standards written into law

➤ In 2013, Whatcom County determined two oil train terminals were non-significant and permitted them without review of their impacts — despite the major risks posed by crude **oil trains that have exploded twelve times** in the US and Canada since.

➤ Current laws are **vulnerable to loopholes** and gray areas that oil companies could exploit to sue Whatcom County for rejecting permits with unmitigable negative impacts to our communities.

➤ One oil spill could cause **irrevocable damage to already endangered fisheries** that are the foundation of the livelihoods and economy of families who have relied on fishing since time immemorial.

➤ Cherry Point is a **targeted route for increased tar sands**, oil, and gas shipment from Canada.

NOW is the time to raise the standard:

September— December 2019



After years of public pressure, the Whatcom County Council is considering amendments to existing law that would raise standards for fossil fuel projects in the Cherry Point industrial zone — and we're on a short timeline between now and December. **It's time Whatcom County started embracing its right and duty to protect public safety and the environment** by setting reasonable standards for industry at Cherry Point.

How you can help

- ➊ **Email** the Whatcom County Council.
- ➋ **Attend** a Council meeting, make a public comment.
- ➌ **Host** a letter-writing event and help spread the word.

Ask Whatcom County to include these key protections:

- Prohibit **new coal, oil or gas transshipment facilities**.
- Prohibit **new shipping piers, docks, or wharfs** in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve.
- At existing facilities, all fossil fuel storage and transshipment upgrades or additions should **require conditional use permits with protections**.
- All new projects at new or existing industries should **require greenhouse gas mitigation** to invest in infrastructure that reduces fossil fuel consumption such as clean power, energy efficiency, building retrofits, and transportation improvements.
- The code needs stronger "change of use" definitions so that **existing terminals serving refineries do not change use to become transshipment hubs** for unrefined fossil fuels like crude oil, tar sands, coal or fracked gas.

Send the County Planning Commission an email supporting these protections

Sample email

TO: PDS_Planning_Commission@whatcomcounty.us

Planning Commissioners,

I hope you recognize the urgent need to reform county code so Whatcom County is empowered to reject projects that unreasonably threaten the health and safety of people and ecosystems, and ensure that existing industries are held accountable to not increase hazards, but rather invest in upgrades that reduce pollution and risk while creating jobs. In your review of the proposed amendments, we will appreciate that you listen to public input, engage in open dialogue and promote transparency in the remainder of the public review process for these important legal protections.

Thank you for your volunteer service to our communities.

[Name]

[Residence]

Timeline of key dates and opportunities

RED = Chance to give public input

