



Whatcom County Planning Commission
311 Grand Avenue
Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Planning Commission Members:

The decision by the Whatcom County Council on September 26th establishing an emergency six-month moratorium prohibiting any new permits related to fossil fuels at the Cherry Point area was disappointing and unprecedented. We urge the Whatcom County Planning Commission not to include any such moratorium in the Cherry Point Urban Growth section of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Such an addition to the County Comp Plan is a serious, risky action that will have far-reaching and lasting ramifications for our community, well beyond just the targeted fossil fuel industries.

Washington is a gateway for international commerce. The state's deep water ports and favorable geographical positioning to Asia give it a significant advantage in exports and imports. But as the country's most trade-dependent state, where one in four jobs is tied to trade, it is concerning that the council voted to extend this ordinance for up to six months. We must work to maintain this legacy of trade through decisions that will grow and improve transportation infrastructure, rather than relying on knee-jerk reactions based upon the politics of emotions.

The extension of this ordinance will harm the Cherry Point companies that are currently operating both safely and proficiently. There are currently more than 2,100 family wage jobs connected to activity at Cherry Point that have an average salary of \$114,000 per year, way above the average in the county. Additionally, the activity in this well-established industrial zone alone provides \$200 million in annual tax revenues on top of the millions in local charitable contributions that support some of the most essential charities in our community like the Boys & Girls Club, the United Way and the Red Cross. The current unemployment rate in Whatcom County was an overwhelming 6.3% in August. We must not cut the legs out of the one sole area that is generating jobs and revenues to an already struggling region.

In addition to the current economic status quo Cherry Point supports, we have to also think about the future opportunities this moratorium will jeopardize. Washington depends on export jobs and trade to drive the economy and short-sighted decisions like this send an unfortunate signal that there are some who would prefer our state be closed for business.

We must think about the larger economic consequences of this action and avoid playing politics in this matter. This planning commission has a responsibly to represent the hard-working families of the region and doing what is best for future generations. Extending this moratorium essentially confirms that the children and grandchildren of Whatcom County residents will not have the same opportunity for good paying jobs and economic opportunity that Cherry Point **currently** provides.

The planning commission would be wise to set this proposal aside and think more broadly about the impact it could have on the people and economy of the region. Thank you very much for your consideration of our opinion on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Keep Washington Competitive

BNSF Railway

Jon Huntley, Chair, Northwest Jobs Alliance

Brad Owens, President, Northwest Jobs Alliance

Larry Brown, Legislative and Political Director for the Aerospace Machinists Union District Lodge 751

Matthew Hepner, Executive Director of Certified Electrical Workers of Washington

Kris Johnson, President, Association of Washington Business

Lee Newgent, Executive Secretary of the Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO

John Stuhlmiller, Chief Executive Officer, Washington Farm Bureau

State Representative Luanne Van Werven (R-Lynden)

State Representative Vincent Buys (R-Lynden)