RESOLUTION NO. 2012 - 250

CITY OF STEVENSON

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STEVENSON WASHINGTON EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT POTENTIAL ADVERSE IMPACTS OF INCREASED RAIL TRAFFIC FROM COAL TRAINS PASSING THROUGH THE CITY AND REQUESTING THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY REVIEWING THE EIS TO IDENTIFY THE IMPACTS TO THE CITY OF STEVENSON

WHEREAS, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) maintains and operates at-grade track running east-west through the City of Stevenson; and

WHEREAS, the proposal to expand terminals in Cowlitz County to export coal will significantly increase the number of coal trains passing through the City of Stevenson; and

WHEREAS, there is an expectation that there will be a significant increase in general freight traffic on the BNSF track; and

WHEREAS, the expanded number of trains would result in an increase in train travel noise and frequency of horn blowing; and

WHEREAS, the substantial increase in train traffic, and specifically coal train traffic, will result in closure of at-grade crossings with greater frequency and longer periods that will create traffic congestion and could negatively impact emergency service response times; and

WHEREAS the City's emergency services will be a first responder to rail derailments and fires and does not have the equipment or sufficient supplies to manage a response without assistance; and

WHEREAS, Stevenson has a side-track capable of hosting a full-length waiting train and additional train traffic will result in more waiting trains and emissions from idling, plus more blown coal dust from stopped trains. Moreover, trains starting from stop result in longer at-grade closure times; and

WHEREAS, until BNSF upgrades engines to the new lower emission standards diesel emissions will remain an identified health risk; and

WHEREAS, the public has a concern that there may be health risks from coal dust and other particulates blown from open cars but the City has no way to evaluate these potential impacts; and

WHEREAS, the City of Stevenson relies on tourism for its economic base and increased train traffic and associated noise could negatively impact the community's ability to attract visitors to the area;

WHEREAS, train whistles and poorly managed train traffic does impact access to and recreational use of the city waterfront which is a key component to the tourism economy and to our citizen's general quality of life;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STEVENSON AS FOLLOWS:

I

We urge the appropriate authorities to require an environmental impact statement that identifies and measures the impacts on our community from the significant increase in coal train traffic and that the City be included as a party of record.

II

We request that the impact statements include impacts to traffic from increase closure of at-grade crossings, impacts to the City of Stevenson's ability to deliver emergency services due to the inability to cross the train tracks, and health and safety impacts related to coal dust and other particulates being blown from open cars and increases in diesel emissions.

III

We urge the appropriate authorities to hold at least one of the environmental impact statement hearings at a location in Skamania County.

IV

We urge the US Corps of Engineers to include freight traffic and the City of Stevenson as a 'Party of Record' in their review of the Gateway Pacific Terminal Project, Cowlitz County, Washington and the Cherry Point Terminal Project, Cowlitz County, Washington.

V

This Resolution shall take effect and be in full force upon passage and signatures hereon. Dated and signed this 17th day of May, 2012.

CITY OF STEVENSON

Frank Cox

Frank Cox, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mary Ann Duncan-Cole

Mary Ann Duncan-Cole
Clerk to the Council

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Kenneth Woodrich, City Attorney