



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM COUNTY

Millennium Bulk Terminal: EIS Scoping Comment 2: Vessel Traffic

The Salish Sea (the new “collective” name for all our inland waters from Olympia to Desolation Sound) is home to 37 mammals, 172 birds, and over 250 fish and macro-invertebrate species. Activities built around these wildlife species such as bird watching whale watching, scuba diving, recreational boating, etc. contribute \$2 MILLION a year to our economy and 21,000 jobs—second only to Boeing!

The commercial fishing industry alone provides over \$3.8 billion a year to Washington’s economy and over 60,000 jobs. The shell fish aquaculture t brings in another \$97 MILLION.

Nature in the marine area provides \$10 BILLION a year to our economy and the Puget Sound basin alone is valued as an economic asset of between \$300 BILLION and 2.6 TRILLION. (Sea Docs executive director, Joe Gaygos) This asset is threatened by the sheer volume of vessel traffic that will be generated by the three remaining proposed coal terminals and the proposals for shipping oil from the Bakken fields. The LWV of Bellingham Washington believes there must be a programmatic study of all of this vessel traffic.

Millennium alone will bring 850 Panamax-class vessels to the Salish Sea; GPT will add 900 Panamax–class ship trips. If all the proposals on the table are permitted we could see a doubling of the present tanker traffic in our fragile waters. This does not even count the huge increase in barge traffic.

Note these vessels are mostly foreign flagged and part of an aging fleet, prone to mechanical and structural failure. A breakup of just one of these vessels turbulent seas that a ship must negotiate to get to the ocean could cause a disaster to all the above industries. In August such a break up occurred off the coast of South Africa. <http://gcaptain.com/bulk-carrier-mv-smart-aground-richards-bay//>

There is no way to mitigate the costs of the destruction of our marine economy.

The LWV of Bellingham Whatcom urges you to do a comprehensive vessel traffic study with a risk/benefit analysis. This must include the cumulative impacts of all the proposed ship traffic.

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