Title: **RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PROPOSED SSA MARINE CHERRY POINT COAL TERMINAL**

Sponsored by: Amber Bronnum (Public Health-Health Services), Student Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Student National Medical Association, the Health Services Student Association, the Critical Development Forum, the Real Food Challenge at UW and 85 graduate and professional students.

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Resolution Number: 03.11-12

WHEREAS the proposed coal export terminal at Cherry Point would harm the global environment by enabling the continued combustion of coal in China by selling it at a price lower than could otherwise be produced, thereby releasing large amounts of heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere, which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change asserts is the “dominant factor in the radiative forcing of climate in the industrial era;” and through localized pollution to air, surface water, groundwater, and soil in communities from Wyoming to China where coal extraction, transportation, and combustion take place.

WHEREAS the coal export terminal would harm local ecosystems in Whatcom County by increasing stresses on endemic herring in Bellingham Bay which are a keystone species in the Salish Sea food web and are already at risk; by contaminating the composition of topsoil within .62 miles of the terminal to up to 20% coal by weight and by potentially introducing invasive species when barges empty ballast water at Cherry Point; and

WHEREAS the coal export terminal would harm the local economy by necessitating up to 18, mile and a half long coal trains a day; disrupting local businesses and devaluing homes with the coal dust and train frequency; and putting at risk waterfront properties at risk including the Downtown Seattle waterfront, Hiram Chittenden Locks, and Golden Gardens.

WHEREAS the coal export terminal would degrade community health by increasing pulmonary, cardiac, cancer, and safety risks because of the diesel particulate matter, coal dust, noise exposure and delayed emergency response times, according to over 180 Whatcom County physicians.

WHEREAS the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has shown that coal dust causes bronchitis, emphysema, and black lung disease in exposed coal workers.

WHEREAS the coal export terminal would harm social equity by sending trains through several underrepresented communities including the South Fork of the Nooksack River valley.
WHEREAS the coal export terminal would harm the UW community by putting at risk the area’s pristine environment which attracts prospective students; and for the aforementioned impacts in this document that affect all residents of Western Washington including the UW community.

WHEREAS the City of Seattle, as signatories to the Earth Charter, is committed to “community development which addresses respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, nonviolence, democracy, and peace.”

WHEREAS the UW community, as stakeholders in Seattle, carries the responsibility to apply learning through civic engagement on issues that have direct impacts to the Seattle community at large, of which the UW is inextricably a part of, by upholding the commitments that our city has made. Current UW students comprise approximately 7% of the total population of Seattle.

WHEREAS UW has committed in its Climate Action Plan, “Careful attention to the effects of climate on the Pacific Northwest...means we work with Washington’s citizens to manage those effects wisely.” recognizing that 79 students have exercised their contribution by signing a petition opposing the coal terminal.

WHEREAS UW signed the President's Climate Commitment, stating that “we believe colleges and universities must exercise leadership in their communities and throughout society by modeling ways to minimize global warming emissions”.

WHEREAS the UW has stated through its Office of Sustainability that “the University of Washington has established a commitment to environmental stewardship, setting the bar well above merely complying with laws and standards. The University is committed to being a positive force for enhancement of the environment, not just in research and education but in how it manages facilities and resources.”

WHEREAS UW was recognized as the 1st “Coolest School” nationally on the Sierra Club’s annual list of universities addressing climate change and sustainability.

WHEREAS the associated student bodies of the University of Puget Sound and Western Washington University have passed similar resolutions opposing coal terminals and UW’s peer universities of Whitman and Evergreen are currently working on similar resolutions,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON:

THAT the GPSS finds the facts included in this document to be an accurate representation of the detriments to the environment, economy, and social welfare associated with the proposed coal export terminal at Cherry Point; and
THAT the GPSS finds that these facts conflict with the values of the community and the University and further finds that UW students have a civic responsibility to the communities of which we are inextricably a part; and

THAT the GPSS take a stance in opposition to the proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point because of its harmful impacts to the global and local environment, the local economy, community health, social equity, and the UW community; and

THAT the GPSS supports alternative economic proposals that uphold the aforementioned values of sustainable communities and sustainable ecosystems; and

THAT the GPSS urges that no new coal export terminals be constructed in the Pacific Northwest, and stands in solidarity with other student communities working across the region, including the Coal Action Network, to protect their communities from similar coal export terminals.

Presented to GPSS for approval on May 30, 2012

Approved on