It borders on madness to dig up a big chunk of North America, tie up traffic across the train route, and then ship off that coal to another country so they can bury us economically, and accelerate the decline of the global climate.

- That is an economic model that creates very few jobs outside of one county, while hindering economic development and mobility here in central Puget Sound, and saddling the region with significant costs to upgrade infrastructure at train crossings.

This study confirms that much of the direct cost to King, Pierce and Snohomish counties is related to increased train traffic – traffic delays at rail crossings and infrastructure improvements. I am very concerned by these findings:

- That passing trains will increase wait times along the BNSF Railway mainline by an average of 65 percent – with 147 percent increase in Marysville!

- That the amount of additional time roads could be blocked by Gateway Pacific Terminal trains would range in places up to nearly 90 minutes per day.

- That someone will have to pay to improve 34 of 101 rail crossings to keep traffic moving.

- That someone will have to pay up to $200 million to build new under-crossings or overcrossings for grade separation.

- That life-saving ambulances and fire engines could be stuck at 21 crossings that are close to hospitals and fire stations.

- That low-income and minority populations in King and Snohomish Counties will be disproportionately hurt by train operations – especially in Kent, Auburn, Pacific, Fife, Seattle, and Everett.

Last week, many of you joined me, Mayor Murray, and more than 50 elected leaders from Washington, Oregon, Montana, and British Columbia to lay out actions we can take together to call for a full accounting of the risks and costs for coal export.

Communities along the rail lines will face a host of negative impacts to traffic, freight mobility, economic development, and health while seeing virtually no economic development benefits. Worse yet, there’s no assurance that the significant costs to upgrade at-grade crossings won’t fall to us.

We need to remember that this study was limited to the impacts of the Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point. There are two other active coal terminal proposals in the
Pacific Northwest, and we are facing a dramatic increase in oil train traffic. The impacts documented today for Cherry Point will be multiplied as we look at the cumulative impacts of proposed coal and oil export terminal expansion across our region.