Deep Dive Report

The Case for an EIS on 33 LPG Projects at Cherry Point

Tell Whatcom County to Require a Thorough Environmental Review!

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1. **An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be required for the 31 prior unpermitted, and the two newly proposed, liquid petroleum gas (LPG) projects at AltaGas' ALA Energy Terminal.**

The Canadian corporation, AltaGas, acquired a majority stake in Petrogas and became the operators of the Ferndale, Washington, liquid petroleum gas (LPG) terminal located on Cherry Point in December 2020. AltaGas has since rebranded the LPG terminal as ALA Energy.

AltaGas is operating a huge fossil fuel distribution terminal which is growing, and which AltaGas' ALA Energy asserts can grow much further. In the past, the LPG terminal

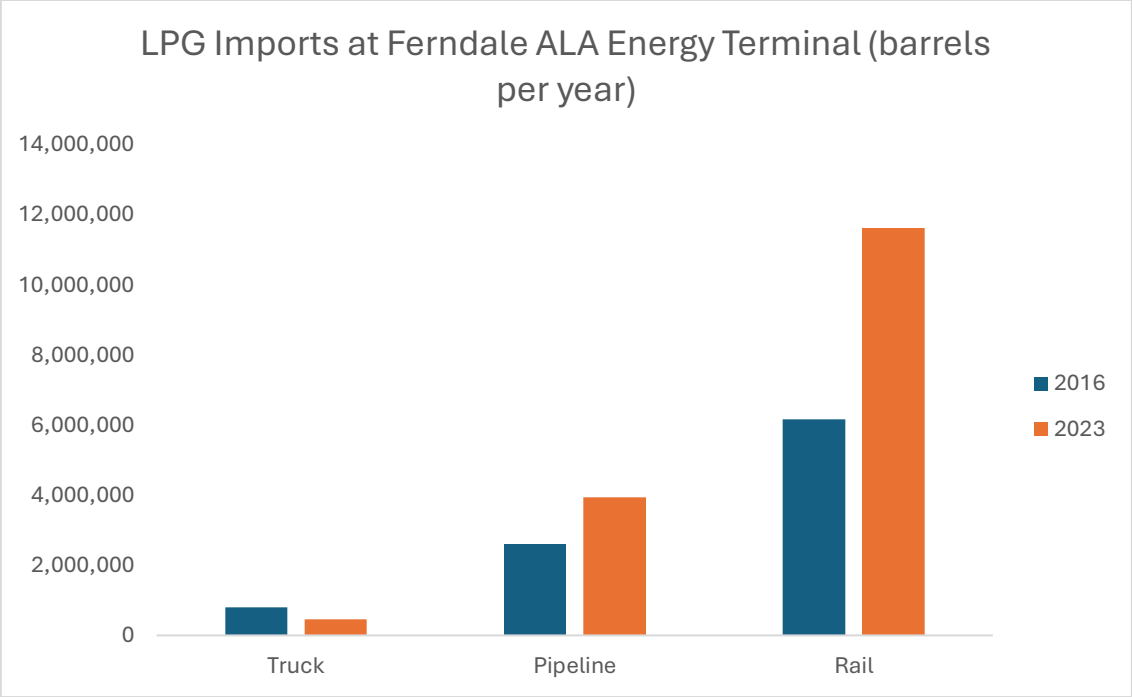
mainly exported butane produced locally.[1] Changes have occurred such that ALA Energy now distributes LPG collected mainly in Canada and imported by rail to Ferndale, WA, primarily for export. These changes have increased the total amount of fossil fuels transshipped at the LPG terminal and have significant environmental impacts that have not been thoroughly evaluated and addressed.

Currently, LPG products (propane and butane) are delivered to the Ferndale terminal via rail, truck, and pipeline. The LPG is used locally or "loaded onto Very Large Gas Carriers (VLGCs) for shipment to overseas markets, offering our global customers significant advantages with shorter shipping distances compared to the U.S. Gulf Coast."[2]

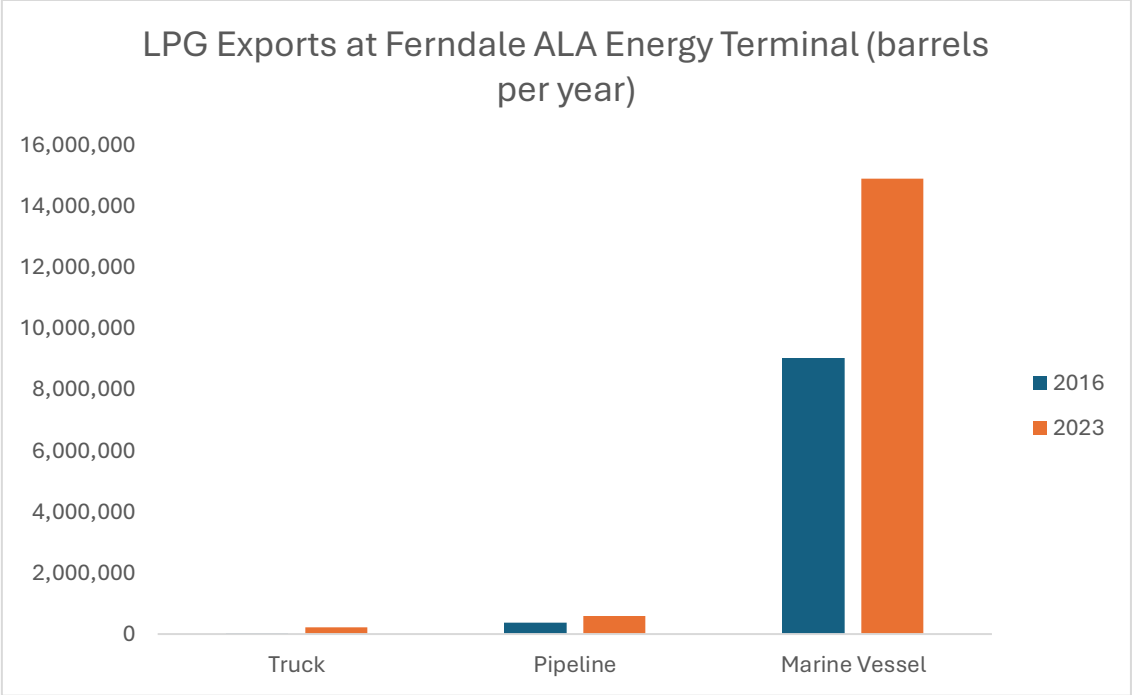
Beginning in 2015, the Ferndale Terminal made several changes that were not permitted by Whatcom County or the Northwest Clean Air Agency (NWCAA), increasing the Terminal's LPG imports via rail and pipeline and exports via marine vessels known as Very Large Gas Carriers.[3] In 2021, the NWCAA issued a Notice of Violation, identifying violations of air quality permitting and regulatory requirements related to the facility changes, increases in LPG imports and exports, and the resulting increase in volatile organic compounds (VOC) emissions.

In 2022, following the issuance of a Notice of Violation[4] from the NWCAA and a $4 million penalty payment from ALA Energy (then, Petrogas) for the unpermitted expansion[5], a compliance agreement between Whatcom County and AltaGas was reached.

[1] RBN Energy LLC. May 14, 2014. West Coast LPG Exports are a Brand New Game – A New Wave of Exports from Ferndale, WA. https://rbnenergy.com/west-coast-lpg-exports-are-a-brand-new-game-from-ferndale-wa.
[2] AltaGas' ALA Energy Ferndale Terminal webpage. https://www.altagas.ca/infrastructure/operations/ala-energy-ferndale-terminal.
[3] Gladstein, Neandross & Associates. 2024. ALA Energy Ferndale Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis. Prepared for ALA Energy, Whatcom County, WA.
[4] Bellingham Herald. January 3, 2022. *Whatcom officials in 'uncharted territory' after facility accused of unpermitted expansion*. By Ysabelle Kempe.
[5] Cascadia Daily News. January 18, 2023. *Petrogas to pay $4 million penalty after unpermitted expansion*. By Julia Lerner.



The total number of LPG (i.e., propane and butane) barrels (bbl) imported by sector in 2016 and 2023. Data source: ALA Energy, Green House Gas Analysis



The total number of LPG (i.e., propane and butane) barrels (bbl) exported by sector in 2016 and 2023. Data source: ALA Energy, Green House Gas Analysis

The agreement mapped a path forward should future changes occur at the Ferndale Terminal. Following the agreement, the County publicly stated: "The permitting and [State Environmental Policy Act] SEPA compliance processes will ***follow standard County procedures and will be transparent and open to public participation*** during both the [permit] Conditional Use Permit process and the SEPA EIS process."

Last year, Whatcom County issued a Notice of Application for AltaGas' ALA Energy's Ferndale Terminal Existing and Planned Improvements project with a September 4, 2024, comment deadline, and a SEPA pre-threshold consultation process, with responses requested by September 13, 2024. The applications submitted included 31 prior unpermitted projects and two new projects.[6]

Friends of the San Juans, Sound Action, Washington Conservation Action, Stand.earth, Sierra Club, San Juan Islanders for Safe Shipping, Save Our wild Salmon Coalition, Friends of the Earth, Communities for a Healthy Bay, Orca Network, Evergreen Islands, and Whatcom Environmental Council submitted Notice of Application and SEPA pre-threshold consultation comments on September 4, 2024. These comments addressed significant deficiencies in the application and SEPA materials. The undersigned have assumed that the additional information and the thorough environmental impact analysis needed would be addressed in the EIS process.

On September 3, 2025, Whatcom County issued a Mitigated Determination on Non-Significance (MDNS) which does not require an EIS and contradicts the county's commitment to the public for a "transparent public review of permit applications and to provide comment on preparation of a full environmental impact statement under the state's SEPA process, including evaluation of appropriate conditions for the facility."

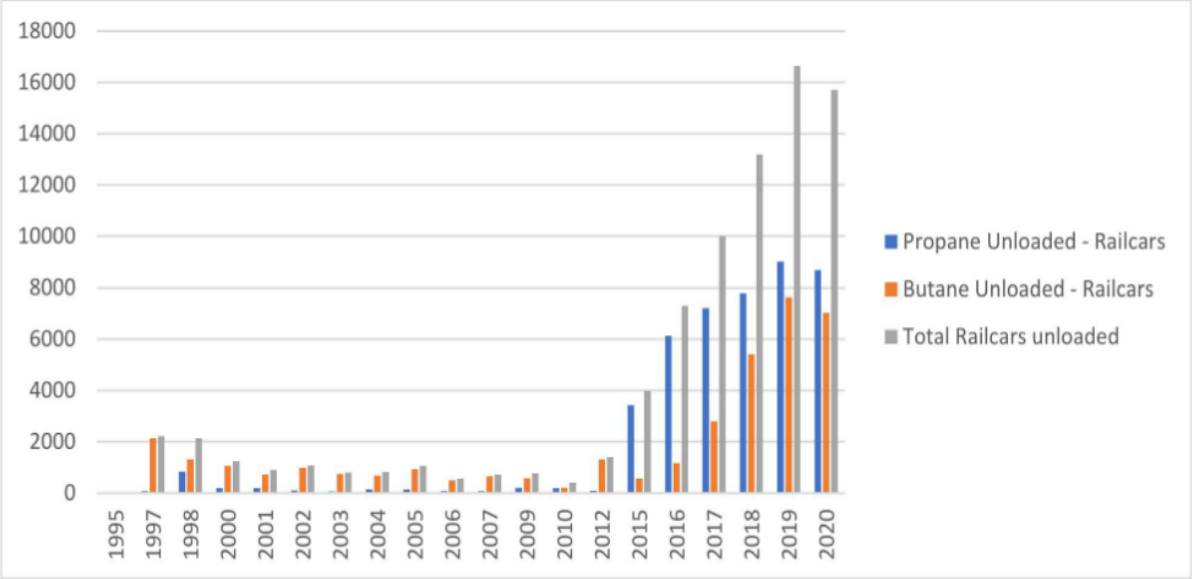
Increasing LPG Imports and Exports at the Ferndale Terminal

Included in the Notice of Application are two reports provided by Burns and McDonnell, the *Current Facility Capacity Evaluation Report* and the *Ferndale Capacity Evaluation Report (Butane Refrigerated Storage: Prior to Aug 15, 2016)*. These reports conclude, after 31 pages of redacted information, that the LPG terminal's transshipment capacity

[6] Whatcom County Planning & Development Services. 2024. ALA Energy Ferndale Terminal | Whatcom County, WA

declined from 2016 to 2023 by 7.7% (3,201 U.S. gallons per minute (GPM) to 2,954 GPM).

This decline in transshipment capacity is contradicted by the Northwest Clean Air Agency (NWCAA). While materials may be received at the facility by pipeline, truck, and rail, most of the throughput expansion since 2015 has been attributable to rail receipts. According to the Northwest Clean Air Agency (NWCAA), the number of railcars delivering LPG to the Ferndale Terminal has increased by about 3,000 railcars per year from 2015 to 2019, with more than 16,000 railcars unloading LPG in 2019. An increase in import and export rate for LPG at the ALA Energy Terminal is further evidenced by an expansion from 2 – 5 berthing events per year in 2015 to more than 30 in 2020 at the Terminal's pier.



There has been a staggering increase in the number of railcars unloading LPG (i.e., propane and butane) at the ALA Energy Terminal. Source: Northwest Clean Air Agency (NWCAA).

The proposal description for the Ferndale Terminal Existing and Planned Improvements on the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Register states:

> Included within this application are also a number of prior projects that were completed without building permits between 2016 and 2021. These permits generally include minor construction including piping, valves, electrical and pipe rack installation.[7]

[7] State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Register. 202503644 - Whatcom County.

A public records request had to be submitted in order to review the 31 prior unpermitted project applications.[8] A review of the prior unpermitted project applications finds that the SEPA Register statement above is incorrect. The prior unpermitted projects include major structural and equipment improvements. The increase in imports and exports could very likely be the result of these projects increasing the LPG Terminal's capacity. One example is the 2021 Wharf Transfer Pump (P-85) Addition, which significantly increases the Ferndale LPG Terminal's capacity, as stated in the original project description. The permit application cover sheet (page 1 of 128) dated September 2023, and the Land Fill and Grade Application submitted by ALA Energy includes a project description that omits this section of the project description that is included on the cover sheet (page 62 of 128) that was issued for construction in January 2021 (emphasis added):

> THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PUMP CAPACITY FOR THE EXISTING WHARF LOADING SYSTEM WHICH LOADS SHIPS WITH LIQUID BUTANE MIX OR LIQUID PROPANE (REFRIGERATED LIQUIDS) AT PETROGAS'S FERNDALE TERMINAL. THE ADDITIONAL PUMP CAPACITY WILL IMPROVE SHIP LOADING TIMES AND WILL ALSO PROVIDE PUMP REDUNDANCY FOR THE WHARF LOADING SYSTEM. ...
>
> IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE ADDITIONAL LOADING CAPACITY, THE PROJECT SCOPE INCLUDES INSTALLING A NEW PUMP (P-85) IN PARALLEL TO THE EXISTING PUMP (P-15) THAT SUPPORTS THE WHARF LOADING SYSTEM.

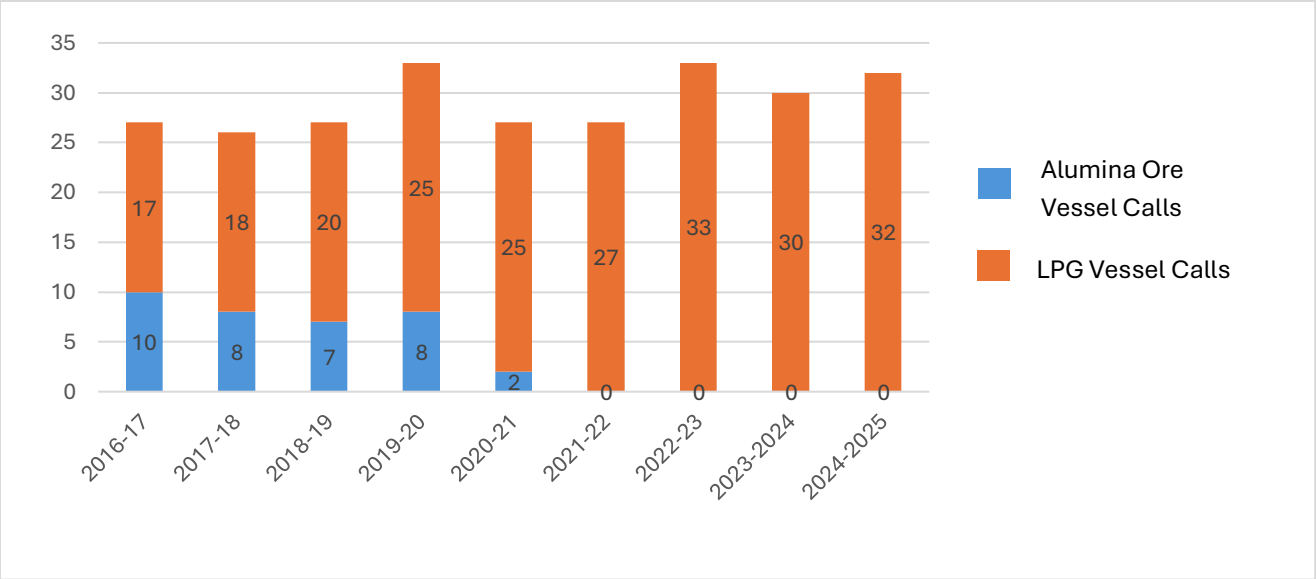
Both project descriptions state that "The existing pump (P-15) will remain in service and will only be operated in the event the new pump (P-85) is out of service." The flow rate of an API 610 vertical can-type marine loading pump (P-85) is 1,744 gallons per minute while a P-15 pump flow rate is 13.5 gallons per minute. If this comparison is accurate, the new pump will "improve ship loading times" by 1,730 gallons per minute.[9]

The prior unpermitted projects' increase in both capacity and throughput from 2016 to 2023 have been omitted from the environmental review process to date.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) aquatic lands lease for the use of the pier states:

[8] Public records request R000878-082425.

[9] Data source for Pump P-15 pump. Data source for pump that meets API 610 specifications (6,600 LPM (Liters Per Minute) = 1743.536 U.S. gallons per minute).



The annual number of Very Large Gas Carriers at the Terminal has nearly doubled since 2016. *Data provided by Washington State's Department of Natural Resources*.

> Each year, up to 24 shiploads of alumina ore are delivered to support plant operations. The unloading time is approximately 5 days per vessel depending on the cargo size and vessel configuration. Additionally, up to 24 vessels will utilize this facility for unloading liquid petroleum gas product.
> A maximum of 48 vessels per year are allowed at the Intalco pier for all products.[10]

While the lease states that "up to 24 vessels will utilize this facility for unloading liquid petroleum gas product," AltaGas' ALA Energy claims they have the lease rights for up to 48 Very Large Gas Carriers per year. AltaGas states that "the marine vessel traffic from the Terminal … is existing vessel traffic that has been in operation with an imposed vessel limit since February 1, 2003."[11]

No historical records of 48 vessels calling at the terminal in any year have been provided, nor is there any SEPA review that shows that the environmental impacts of 48 vessels per year have ever been evaluated and/or whether those adverse impacts are adequately mitigated by the MDNS.

[10] Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Aquatic Lands Lease (Commercial) Lease No. 20-A08488. February 3, 2003. Exhibit B Vessel Traffic. PDF page 28.
[11] Letter to Whatcom County from Nicole Finnamore, Director, Export Development, Regulatory, AltaGas Ltd. June 10, 2025. Page 1.

AltaGas states:

> Since 2016, the total vessel traffic at the Pier has ranged between 26 and 35 vessels annually.[12]

However, until 2022, this vessel traffic included both Very Large Gas Carriers and ships transporting alumina ore. The annual number of Very Large Gas Carriers that exported LPG from AltaGas' ALA Energy Terminal almost doubled from February 1, 2016, to January 31, 2025.[13]

After more than two years, Whatcom County has abandoned the requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) at the terminal. However, an increase in LPG imports and exports is clearly documented, and an in-depth EIS is needed to fully understand the potential impacts on human health and the environment for existing and proposed LPG projects at AltaGas' ALA Energy Terminal.

2. Liquid petroleum gas (LPG) operations that have, and will, result from the prior unpermitted projects at AltaGas' ALA Energy Terminal are impacting communities and endangered species in the Salish Sea, including Southern Resident killer whales.

Increased LPG import and export at AltaGas' ALA Energy Terminal, evidenced by an almost doubling of vessel port calls and railcar unloadings over the last 9 years, intensifies LPG vessel traffic through the surrounding Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve (CPAR) as vessels must traverse the CPAR to access the Terminal's dock. Automatic Identification System (AIS) data[14] shows that some Very Large Gas Carriers spend more than 17 hours in the CPAR during Terminal visits. Further, some Very Large Gas Carriers, like the *AYAME*, have anchored in the CPAR, rather than the designated anchorage areas approved by the United States Coast Guard. Noting this, Friends of the San Juans worked alongside other coalition members for a mitigating condition that prohibits future anchoring in the CPAR.

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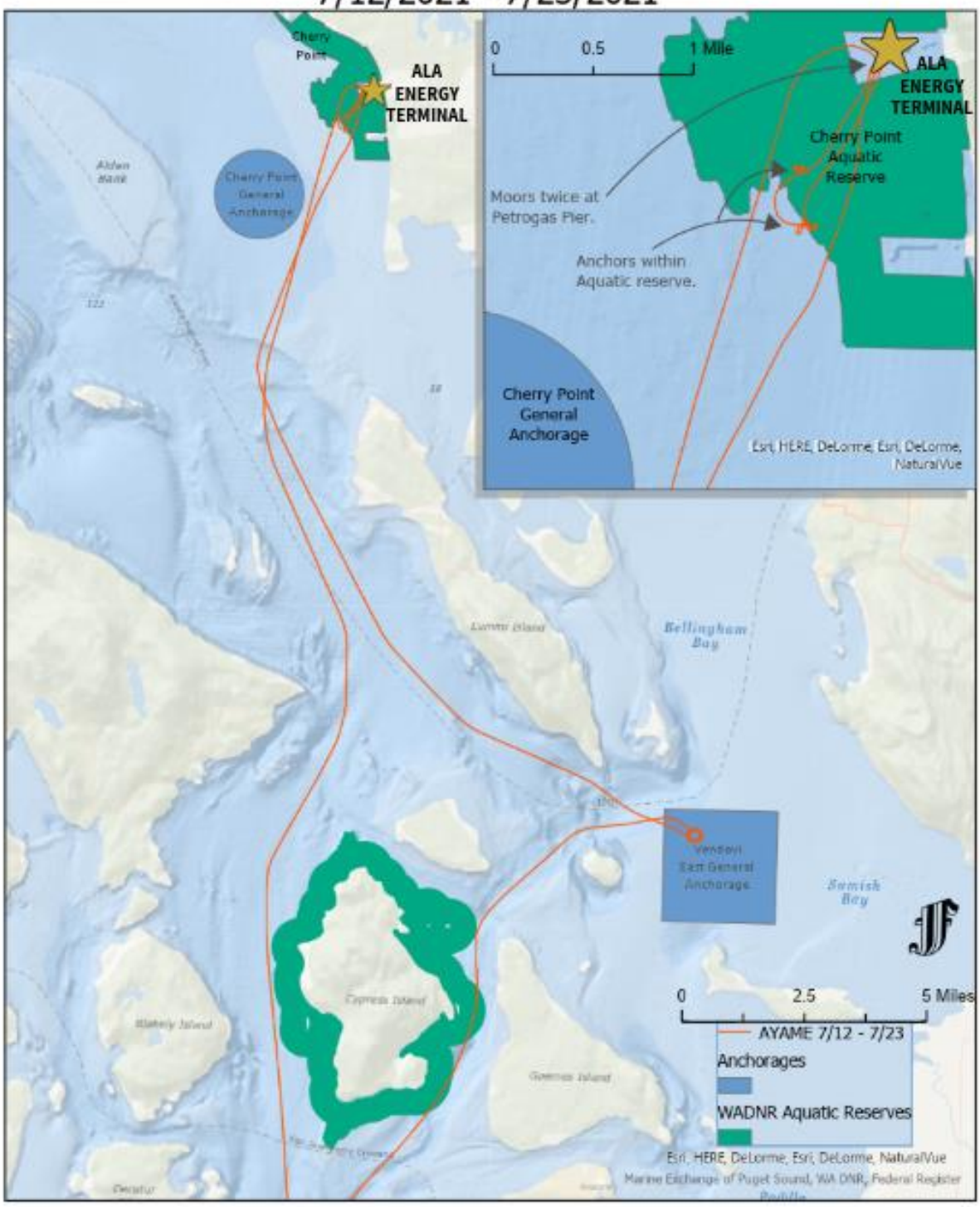
[12] Letter to Whatcom County from Nicole Finnamore, Director, Export Development, Regulatory, AltaGas Ltd. June 10, 2025, and Appendix B.3 Marine Vessel Analysis.

[13] Public records request received by Friends of the San Juans from DNR on March 13, 2025. Note that the DNR lease year is February 1 to January 31. The data provided begins February 1, 2016 and ends on January 31, 2025. The numbers included omit any vessels at the pier in January 2016.

[14] AIS data for the Very Large Gas Carriers that called at the ALA Energy LPG Ferndale Terminal was purchased by Friends of the San Juans from the Marine Exchange



The track line of the Very Large Gas Carrier, AYAME, and the location of AltaGas' ALA Energy Terminal in relation to the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve. Also Shown are Areas within the reserve that AYAME anchored.

The Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve (CPAR) provides critical habitat for forage fish and intertidal species and helps protect Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed animals like Chinook and sockeye salmon, as well as Southern Resident killer whales.

In its permit application to Whatcom County, ALA Energy provides a DNV report titled, *ALA Energy Ferndale Terminal: Analysis of Vessel Noise Impacts on Southern Resident Killer Whales*. The report shows a probable increase in vessel traffic attributable to the proposed changes at the terminal. It also finds that the average 24-hour cumulative underwater noise level from shipping operations to and from the ALA Energy Terminal is 140 – 150 decibels (dB) – a range that is not significant enough to cause auditory injuries in Southern Resident killer whales.[15] However, sound frequencies within this range can cause impaired physiology (e.g., stress), acoustic masking (i.e., enhanced difficulties with foraging and communications), and behavioral disturbances in Southern Residents. It is also 20 – 30 dB above the regulatory threshold designated as a "Level B" behavioral harassment to killer whales by the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act.[16] The DNV report omitted the three frequency bands that were identified as being particularly relevant to the acoustic quality of the Southern Resident killer whales' habitat.[17]

Of major concern is the impact that shipping noise from terminal operations may have on the ability for the Southern Residents to locate and catch their already endangered primary prey source, Chinook salmon. Additionally, terminal vessels often emit high-frequency sounds (188 – 190 dB) while navigating through waters that may breach the threshold for auditory injuries in Southern Residents, disrupting their ability to echolocate and detect objects around them.

The risk of ship strikes from heightened vessel traffic is another important consideration. In 2020, a postmortem examination of the Southern Resident killer whale, J34, confirmed that he died from trauma consistent with a vessel strike. A 2020 study assessed causes of death for stranded Southern Residents and found that out of a total of 9, 4 died because of traumatic incidents related to ship strikes.[18]

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[15] Gladstein, Neandross & Associates. 2024. NOAR Appendix F – Marine Vessel Analysis. Prepared for ALA Energy, Whatcom County, WA.
[16] NOAA Fisheries. ESA Section 7 consultation tools for marine mammals on the West Coast. U.S. Department of Commerce.
[17] Heise, K. et al. (2017). Proposed Metrics for the Management of Underwater Noise for Southern Resident Killer Whales (Coastal Ocean Report Series, pp. 1–29). Coastal Ocean Research Institute. 10.25317/CORI20172.
[18] Raverty et al. 2020. Pathology findings in stranded killer whales. *PLOS ONE, 15*(12), e0242505.

3. Very Large Gas Carriers are known to have detrimental impacts on human health and the environment.

The potential environmental impacts and the risk profile of Very Large Gas Carriers needs to be thoroughly reviewed. Of particular concern is the fact that Very Large Gas Carriers have a higher risk of catastrophic explosions than alumina ore vessels given that LPG is highly flammable.[19] Two recent and notable examples are discussed below.

On July 6, 2025, the LPG tanker ECO WIZARD exploded in the Gulf of Finland while berthed and carrying out LPG unloading and loading operations at the port of Ust-Luga, Russia. All 23 crew members were evacuated safely, but the explosion caused liquid ammonia to leak from the vessel. The extent of damage to the vessel and the amount of ammonia that leaked into the environment before being contained is unclear.[20] Ammonia spills can kill marine life, enhance eutrophication, deoxygenate waters, and impact air quality by releasing nitrous oxides – potent greenhouse gases.

On January 2019, a deadly at-sea explosion occurred during the transfer of LPG between two tankers in the Black Sea, the VENICE and the MAESTRO. Of the 32 crew that were onboard the ships at the time of the incident, 10 perished in the fire, and another 10 remained missing after the incident and are presumed dead.[21]

LPG is highly flammable and poses a significant threat to health, safety, and the environment. While there have been no explosions to date of Very Large Gas Carriers in the Salish Sea, vessel traffic is cumulatively increasing in response to growing LPG facilities throughout the United States and Canada and shared vessel traffic lanes in the Salish Sea. Increased vessel traffic increases the probability that an accident will occur, threatening the safety and integrity of the marine environment and surrounding communities.

Water pollution and contaminants from Very Large Gas Carriers can severely impact Southern Residents and other endangered species. One example is the use of exhaust gas cleaning systems, better known as scrubbers, which are an onboard device that enables vessels to use Heavy Fuel Oil. Scrubbers remove some of the harmful pollutants from a ship's exhaust, and more than 80% discharge the pollutants directly

[19] LPG Safety Data Sheet; Alumina Safety Data Sheet
[20] Hancock, P. 2025. Eco Wizard – Shipwreck Log Details the explosion of the LPG tanker *Eco Wizard*
[21] SAFETY4SEA. 2019. *At least 10 dead from LPG tanker explosion in Kerch Strait*.

into the ocean.[22] Scrubbers remove the highly acidic sulfur oxides (SOx) from ship exhaust stacks along with the toxic non-combusted components of Heavy Fuel Oil and combustion by-products, including heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), nitrates, nitrites, and particulate matter. The bioaccumulation of heavy metals and toxic chemicals in the food chain affects both wildlife and human health. From a review of the Vessel General Permit annual reports of the Very Large Gas Carriers that exported LPG from the ALA Energy Terminal between January 2021 and April 2024 and those currently under contract, it appears that twenty of the Very Large Gas Carriers have scrubbers.

One of the Very Large Gas Carriers that is currently under contract with the Ferndale Terminal, the AQUAMARINE PROGRESS, has exported LPG from the Ferndale Terminal for several years and uses an "open" scrubber that constantly discharges exhaust pollutants overboard. The total amount of scrubber washwater (tons), heavy metals (kilograms; kg), and PAHs (kg) discharged while in the Salish Sea (Port Angeles east) were calculated using data provided in the Vessel General Permit Reports for the AQUAMARINE PROGRESS in 2021, 2022, and 2023, in combination with the amount of time the vessel spent in the area. While concentrations are typically used to assess pollutant levels, it's impossible to determine the concentrations of the pollutants discharged without having a better understanding of variables like diffusion rate and the underlying wave and current dynamics. For simplicity, and to highlight the point that a large number of dangerous pollutants were released each time AQUAMARINE PROGRESS discharged its scrubber washwater, we simplified the calculations to focus solely on the amount of each pollutant that was released into the environment. Our calculations were modeled after the study *Vessel Pollution in Pacific Canada* by Environment and Climate Change Canada for the Government of Canada.[23]

In 2022, 96,633 tons of scrubber washwater was discharged into the Salish Sea (Port Angeles east). The following year, more than 700 kg of nitrates and nearly 70 kg of zinc were discharged into the Salish Sea from the AQUAMARINE PROGRESS alone. Heavy metals are elemental and therefore cannot biodegrade; cannot be metabolized or broken down into less toxic substances by living organisms. When heavy metals and PAHs are absorbed by marine organisms, they can cause weakened immune systems,

[22] IMO Uptake of Alternative Fuels webpage. https://futurefuels.imo.org/home/latest-information/fuel-uptake/.
[23] Government of Canada. (2024). *Response to Submission SEM 23-007*. CEC.

organ damage, and in some cases, death.[24] These contaminants can also negatively impact top predators, like Southern Resident killer whales and humans as the pollutants bioaccumulate up the food chain.[25]

Scrubber discharge (tons) and the total amount of nitrates, heavy metals, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) (kilograms; kg) discharged overboard while the AQUAMARINE PROGRESS was present in the Salish Sea from Port Angeles east.

PARAMETER	2021	2022	2023
Scrubber Discharge (tons)	40,469.55	96,533.70	54,416.12
Nitrates (kg)	80.22	155.81	708.81
Arsenic (kg)	0.63	1.50	1.54
Cadmium (kg)	0.09	0.37	0.15
Chromium (kg)	0.68	1.63	4.62
Copper (kg)	148.98	50.02	3.08
Lead (kg)	3.48	2.79	1.54
Nickel (kg)	3.93	10.41	1.54
Selenium (kg)	NA	NA	1.54
Thallium (kg)	NA	NA	1.54
Vanadium (kg)	13.52	55.22	3.08
Zinc (kg)	46.41	28.70	69.34
PAHs (kg)	0.26	0.27	0.35

Data from the Vessel General Permit reports also shows that, when discharged, the pH of the AQUAMARINE PROGRESS scrubber discharges ranged from 2.53 - 6.02. Ocean acidification is a growing concern for the Salish Sea as the ecosystem is naturally more acidic than other waters, primarily due to its high rates of summer upwelling, leaving the ecosystem especially susceptible to ocean acidification from anthropogenic activities. Even small changes in pH can pose a significant risk to marine life, with calcifying organisms like shellfish being the most likely to be negatively impacted. For example, Pacific oysters can survive brief dips below a pH of 7.7, but anything below that significantly impacts their chances of survival. Washington State's shellfish industry is worth $53.3 million, but the industry has been struggling for the last couple of decades as a result of ocean acidification, with some years experiencing a 100%

[24] Zhang et al. 2024. Toxicity of oil components to marine organisms: Insights from water-soluble fractions. *Scientific Reports, 14*, Article 71547.
[25] Kwiatkowski et al. 2024. Health risks from chemical exposures in vulnerable populations. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health, 20*(3).

mortality rate in young hatchery-raised oysters due to the acidic waters. Ocean acidification also has cultural consequences, as coastal Indigenous communities have been harvesting shellfish since time immemorial. The pH of scrubber discharge water is extremely acidic and is likely to cause significant mortalities to marine life throughout the Salish Sea, impacting the ecosystem, fisheries, and longstanding cultural traditions.

Ships that use Heavy Fuel Oil with scrubbers also produce significantly more air pollution than ships using low-sulfur fuels.[26] Black carbon emissions can contribute to asthma, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.[27] In addition to its carbon emissions and scrubber discharges, Very Large Gas Carriers can negatively impact marine ecosystems and coastal communities through accidental spills or cargo leaks, the release of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) during loading and unloading operations, and heightened shipping traffic. With the recent almost doubling of Very Large Gas Carriers at the LPG Terminal and potential further increases, an assessment of their impact on human health and the environment needs to be conducted.

The pier at the ALA Energy Terminal in Ferndale can receive and berth vessels with drafts of 35 feet or less.[28] All Very Large Gas Carriers that are under contract with AltaGas have drafts that exceed 35 feet, ten of which have drafts over 40 feet.[29] Dredging of the sediment surrounding the pier is inevitable to ensure successful visitation and berthing of vessels at the terminal. Dredging can cause irreparable damage to benthic and nearshore habitats, and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service identified "dredging and dredge material disposal" as one of "12 types of human activities that have the potential to affect the habitat features essential to the conservation of Southern Resident killer whales."[30]

In addition to the wide range of environmental impacts from the Very Large Gas Carriers at the ALA Energy Terminal, the existing creosote pilings at the pier have been

[26] The International Council on Clean Transportation. 2020. Air emissions and water pollution discharges from ships with scrubbers.
[27] Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). 2014. Fuel Oils / Kerosene | ToxFAQs™. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
[28] Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Aquatic Lands Lease (Commercial) Lease No. 20-A08488. February 3, 2003. Exhibit B Plan of Operations. Current Use. Page 1 of 6.
[29] Letter to Whatcom County from Nicole Finnamore, Director, Export Development, Regulatory, AltaGas Ltd. June 10, 2025. ENGO Appendix B List of Terminal Vessels Current Contracts.
[30] National Marine Fisheries Service. 2021. Revision of the Critical Habitat Designation for Southern Resident Killer Whales Final Biological Report. Page ii. https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/31587.

leaching toxic materials into marine sediments for decades. According to Washington State's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), about half of the pilings have been removed or treated, but the remaining pilings will continue to leach toxins into the sediments, causing ecological exposure and potential impacts from creosote-impaired water quality.[31]

Through an Aquatic Lands Lease managed by Washington's Department of Natural Resources, the Ferndale Terminal can legally berth up to 48 vessels per year at the wharf and pier – a rate that they may soon achieve. Whatcom County is required to consider more than the "narrow, limited environmental impact of the immediate, pending action." Cheney v. City of Mountlake Terrace, 87 Wn.2d 338, 344, 552 P.2d 184 (1976).

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed to provide an accurate history of both rail and ship traffic, pollution, and water contamination at the pier and in the Salish Sea. An EIS is warranted to evaluate the potential impacts from recent and proposed increases in imports and exports at AltaGas' Ferndale ALA Energy Terminal could impact the Salish Sea ecosystem, endangered species, and communities and to identify mitigations.

Learn More

- Whatcom County's ALA Energy Ferndale Terminal Current Project webpage: https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4448/ALA-Energy-Ferndale-Terminal
- Whatcom County's statement that an EIS would be required: https://www.whatcomcounty.us/CivicSend/ViewMessage/message/195837
- AltaGas' ALA Energy Ferndale Terminal: https://www.altagas.ca/infrastructure/operations/ala-energy-ferndale-terminal
- Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA): https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review

[31] Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Management Plan. Appendices A – G. April 2024. Page 43. https://dnr.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/aqr_resv_cp_appendices.pdf.

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) requirement under SEPA: https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/guide-for-lead-agencies/environmental-impact-statements
- Whatcom County's Land Use and Conditional Use Permits (CUPs): https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1033/Land-Use-Permit-Types

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Friends of the San Juans' coalition leadership and advocacy for stronger safeguards at the Ferndale LPG Terminal has resulted in mitigations like the use of designated anchorage areas and prohibiting anchoring in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve—tangible wins for Southern Residents, salmon, and the Salish Sea.

Friends and environmental organization partners are demanding an Environmental Impact Statement before there's any further expansion at the Ferndale LPG Terminal. Join us in taking action! Submit Comments Now