

PLN2019-00010: Surface Mining Pipeline Buffer Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Whatcom County Council
Natural Resources Committee
June 29, 2021



Background

- ▶ Council proposal to identify minimum safe distance between surface mining and petroleum pipelines to ensure a pipeline is not exposed or rupture during earthquake, based on 9.0+ earthquake.
- ▶ No standard distance (variable due to soil, geology, etc.).
- ▶ Surface Mining Advisory Committee (SMAC)/ Planning Commission (PC) recommendation:
 - Requires site specific geotechnical analysis based on large magnitude, low-frequency seismic events (essentially worst case scenario) at Cascadia Subduction Zone and proximal crustal faults.

SMAC/PC Recommendation

- ▶ WCC 20.73.153
 - (9) When mineral extraction is proposed within 500 feet of a gas or petroleum transmission pipeline, a site specific geotechnical analysis of potential impacts to the pipeline is required. The analysis shall show that mining will not result in an increased likelihood of the pipeline becoming exposed or rupturing during an earthquake, and shall consider various seismic scenarios with a 2 percent probability of exceedance in 50 years on both proximal crustal faults and at the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

PC Recommendation

- ▶ WCC 20.81.020.A
 - Land Division, High-Consequence Land Uses, ~~and~~ Essential Public Facilities and Surface Mining.
- ▶ Requires 15 day comment period to pipeline operators prior to approval.

Questions?

