

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 8, 2026

**BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GROUPS UNITE TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN
WHATCOM COUNTY**

[FERNDALE, Wash.] – Regional business and industry groups have come together to form a new alliance called **BUILD Whatcom**. Short for *Businesses United for Industry and Labor Development*, BUILD Whatcom is focused on strengthening economic development in Whatcom County and marks a collaborative step towards supporting long-term growth and opportunity for the community.

“This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to the economic future of Whatcom County,” said Guy Occhiogrosso, President and CEO of the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce. “By working together, we can amplify our impact and ensure that economic development efforts are strategic and responsive to community needs.”

By aligning resources, expertise, and shared goals, BUILD Whatcom aims to support job creation, attract investment, and promote initiatives that enhance the region’s economic vitality. The importance of this work is already reflected in the impact of the Cherry Point industrial area, where businesses:

- Contribute more than \$200 million in tax revenue annually
- Provide wages 35% to 100% higher than the county average
- Directly or indirectly support one in 10 jobs in Whatcom County

“Whatcom County thrives when businesses, community groups, and public agencies work together toward a strong and stable local economy. By creating predictable, efficient permitting and partnering on smart environmental stewardship, we can support good jobs while caring for the natural resources that make our community special,” said Lance Calloway, Northern District Manager of the Associated General Contractors of Washington. “Working collaboratively ensures a healthy future—both economically and environmentally—for everyone who calls Whatcom County home.”

“Strong communities depend on a stable and competitive economic base,” said Jon Ewing, Vice President and General Manager of HARRIS. “BUILD Whatcom is bringing together well-established and respected businesses and coalitions to support development that benefits workers, families and the broader community.”

Community engagement will be a cornerstone of BUILD Whatcom, with the alliance working closely with local leaders, residents, and businesses to ensure initiatives reflect the region's priorities.

"Industry is a critical part of the City of Ferndale's economic base. A good example of this are the Cherry Point businesses that support Ferndale schools and dozens of local community organizations. Cherry Point industry is part of the DNA of the Ferndale community," explained City of Ferndale Mayor Greg Hansen.

"Economic development works best when it's a shared effort," said Andrea Doyle, Manager of External Affairs and Tribal Relations at ALA Energy | AltaGas. "BUILD Whatcom is creating opportunities for the community to engage, ask questions and be part of decisions that affect Whatcom County's future."

One upcoming way to get involved is by attending the Whatcom County public hearing on ALA Energy's Ferndale Terminal at Cherry Point, scheduled for January 28 at the Whatcom County Courthouse. Cherry Point industries play a vital role in the economic and social fabric of Whatcom County and this public review process is an important opportunity for transparent, fact-based decision making.

For more information visit the [BUILD Whatcom](#) website.

For media inquiries, please contact:

buildwhatcomWA@gmail.com