

## Port of Vancouver Internship

By Nabaa Wali, Intern

Why the Port of Vancouver USA? It's a good question to consider when looking for an internship. I never knew about the port until I heard about it from Partners in Careers. All I knew, was shipping takes place globally and that most large companies use ports to transport their products. However, even if this activity sounds like it doesn't contribute to our daily life, perhaps that is because we have never been curious enough to dig deeper into what ports do.

The port specializes in marine and industrial business, connecting markets such as Asia and South America to places as far away as the U.S. Midwest and Canada. Also, the port's Terminal 1 project is creating a fun destination waterfront for the region. In addition, the port works on projects like the replacement of the I-5 Bridge and other key transportation projects around the region. Not forgetting about the environment, the port has taken on habitat management, clean air, and a climate action plan by including it in their environment approach. Also, the port provides tours (virtual for now) so the public can see what happens behind the secured gates.



Port of Vancouver USA intern, Nabaa Wali

### How the Port Connects with Our Daily Life

As I mentioned in the beginning, large companies use ships, trains and trucks to move their products. One of these companies is Amazon. Amazon is the world's largest online retailer. We have all likely shopped online from Amazon in our lives. Amazon also has a feature called Prime which is the fastest time shipment Amazon offers and your orders are delivered in two days.

I know this sounds cool and everyone likes it, but not everyone takes the time to really look at it and see the process their orders go through before arriving at their door - or at least I didn't, and it never occurred to me, or I just never took the time to research it. After reading the article, "[How Buying on Amazon Works](#)," it explained what happens the second you place your order:

"Once a customer submits their order, Amazon's impressive backend system starts working. Orders from third-party sellers are routed to Amazon, which takes a cut of those sales. The Amazon backend routes the order to the nearest fulfillment center, where a picker finds it. The product is packed and then placed in a waiting delivery truck, depending on the shipping option. The entire process may only take minutes from when the customer gives a final order confirmation before it is placed in the delivery truck."

I want to highlight the behind-the-scenes aspects of ordering and the amount of work that goes into creating and moving products. To the buyer, it happens fast which is the cool part about it. Also (fun fact), your order gets put in a specific delivery truck depending on the shipping option you choose. So, if your order is *not* Prime shipping, it is put in a waiting truck.

The process of shipping doesn't only stop at orders, it's also interesting to think about the products we

use daily, like makeup, kitty litter, and main things in our homes. As I've mentioned, makeup and kitty litter (which I know are two different things) have a common ingredient which is bentonite clay. Bentonite clay is an "active protective layer of geosynthetic clay liners." It's made of volcanic ash. It's used in cat litter because it can absorb odor to control it, and much more. In makeup, it's used for products that are categorized for oily skin like, tightening, brightening, acne-clearing and toxin reduction. In the article, "[Why Bentonite Clay Could Be The Clear Skin Solution You've Been Looking For](#)," it explains more about how it works in skin products:

"When bentonite clay comes in contact with a toxin, it absorbs that toxin and then releases its vitamins and minerals for the body to use. As a result, it's an effective ingredient for removing skin impurities such as excess oils and clogged pores," explains Dr. Marnie Nussbaum.

Bentonite is used in many applications, and as cargo, these kinds of main ingredients for products get shipped back and forth a lot until they're finally turned into one product that is then available for people to buy. This type of long process is called Supply Chain because it goes through different steps to become the final product we buy and use. This is a general overview of what we get from searching it up but going more in-depth about it is more fun. This way, we can actually know what each step is and how it contributes to things around us like the port, the product itself we use, and much more.



*Bentonite clay is one of the many commodities that crosses the docks of the Port of Vancouver*

Being an intern at the port is really fun, think of it like going behind the scenes of things that happen in our day to day lives. Learning about the way companies are able to deliver our orders in two days and how in a short amount of time a lot of work is put in, yet from our point of view, it's like magic when the items appear at our front doors in no time. Another weird yet really cool thing is bentonite clay, it's used in two different things: kitty litter and makeup. I would have never thought these two very different items have something in common. There is so much more to learn at the port, and amazing projects that are being worked on.

Partners in Careers helped me choose an internship that fit my interest, also it's a great opportunity to take advantage of. An internship gives you more knowledge, experience, and is a great way to learn more about yourself to see what you like and what fits your interests. As a high school student, when we get asked what we want to do, most of the time the answer is, "I don't know," and that's totally normal because we don't have a lot of experience in the outside world. That's when having an internship really helps. Through internships, volunteering, and joining clubs, it gives us the opportunity to learn more about what we like and dislike to get a feel of what we want to do after high school.