

To Ferry Advisory Committee,

The ferries are over water highways and they should receive the full support of our Legislature. As a citizen who lives west of Puget Sound and depends on the ferries to reach many of the areas east of the Sound I am appalled that the Governor and the Legislature is willing to just cut off our major transportation system. They would never consider closing the bridge to Mercer Island after 6pm or say that I-90 or Route 2 can only operate from 6am to 6pm or close lanes but they think that citizens living west of Puget Sound can be cut off from their major means of transportation at that time or reduce their crossing.

I travel to Edmonds and Lynnwood several times a month. I then have family or friends pick me up or use public transportation. If there are no ferries after 6pm I will be stranded at the dock or have to limit my visit. My family and friends who live east and north of Puget Sound often use the Kingston Ferry to visit. If Plan B is put into effect they will be denied access to their family and friends for any events that occurs after 6pm or have to spend 4+ hours driving all the way around Kitsap, Peirce, and King County rather than take a 30 minute ferry ride. You cannot reduce the evening ferry runs in Kingston.

I am also concerned about eliminating frequent fares, senior fares, plus increases in regular fares. There are thousands of commuters who depend on this ferry to provide transportation to their jobs. Many need ferries that run after 6pm. There are also many ferry riders who travel to places east of Puget Sound for entertainment. They will be stranded if there are no evening ferries or chose to limit attendance at events across the waters.

Maybe it's time for other areas of the state to pay their share of travel to and from the Seattle area. Why is it only Kitsap County that has to pay a toll or a ferry to travel out of its area?

If you have to vote now please consider Plan A. Then reconsider how important the marine highway system is to the economic and emotional health of West Sound residents and develop a viable and reliable ferry system.

Jean Connolly  
33865 Hood Canal Drive NE  
Kingston, WA 98346



CHRISTOPHER P. WILLIAMS  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

January 8, 2009

Washington State Ferries  
Attn: Joy Goldenberg  
2901 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98121-1042

Dear Joy:

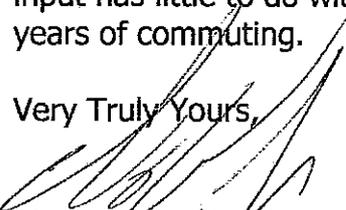
Please find the attached Kingston comment form. I have reviewed Plan A and Plan B. I would make the following observation. Washington state eliminated the private ferry system because, though companies were competing independently, it was very high cost, the system was not reliable and the citizens were generally speaking, unhappy. Hence, the Washington state ferry system was created.

Privatizing the ferry system by authorizing passenger only service will injure the system by taking away profitable walk on only passengers. When Kingston had a passenger only ferry the residents parked their cars in Kingston and took the ferry directly downtown. Those walk on passengers, when that system was eliminated, then became part of the Edmonds Kingston run often taking the ferry and then the train or bus achieving the same result although more circuitous.

Because the walk on passenger is pure profit to the ferry system, elimination of the walk on passenger eliminates revenue without any cost benefit saving. While I recognize that cut backs are likely given the reduction and the current cost of fuel, a fuel surcharge seems inappropriate.

Participation in the survey seems somewhat futile as far as I can tell. Customer input has little to do with the operation of the ferry system, at least in my many years of commuting.

Very Truly Yours,



Christopher P. Williams

January 14, 2009 Kingston, Washington

### Comments on Washington State Ferries' Long Range Plan

As residents of Kingston, we are very concerned over elements of the Long Range Plan currently under consideration. We understand Plan A and B will be proposed to the Legislature by the end of this month. Given the state's financial situation it's understandable the Legislature would look favorably on Plan B, which would be devastating to those of us in Kitsap County dependent on our marine-highway.

After reading your Executive Summary, it's apparent even the committee established to identify solutions to challenges facing the ferry system didn't understand ferries are an extension of the highway system. Under the section "Long Term Funding", the paper reads, "...the Legislature has filled the funding gap created by the 1-695 budget cuts by allocating transportation funds to WSF that would have otherwise supported the highway system. In light of the continuing needs of the state highway system, diverting funds from it to support the marine highways is not a sustainable long-term funding approach." Article II, Section 40 of the state constitution states the ferry system **IS** part of the highway system. It's simply not funded as though it is. We could find nowhere in either of your plans that strongly points that fact out to the Legislature.

Those of us who depend on the ferry system aren't asking for luxurious modes of transportation. We want reliability, as most residents of the state expect of their roads and bridges. Currently the Edmonds-Kingston run more than covers its operating costs and in fact subsidizes less efficient runs, like Bremerton. Yet Plan B suggests curtailing evening sailings on both runs. Given current union contracts, we're not sure any savings would result from the shut-down.

Where is the efficiency in "Wave-To-Go" tickets? They're still collected in toll booths by employees. How much money did that system waste? Now we're being asked to pay more forever for what will essentially be less service.

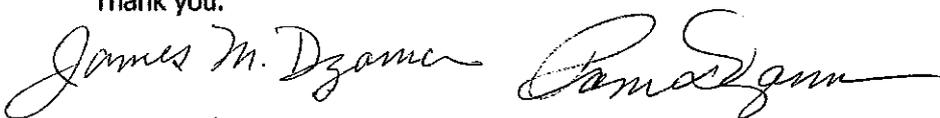
We were unable to find answers to the following questions and therefore wonder whether any of these issues were considered: How much revenue is generated by out-of-state ferry riders and how would curtailing current ferry service affect that source; how would the changes under Plan A or B affect the economic viability of communities, especially those west of Puget Sound? Without answers to those critical questions, it seems imprudent to make recommendations which could severely adversely affect ferry dependent communities.

Current law requires replacement vessels to be built in Washington. Where is your suggestion to the Legislature to consider changing the law to obtain competitive bids from out of state boat builders? Where was the cost/benefit analysis?

Where is your plan for a viable marine-transportation system, not one which would cripple cross sound transportation so necessary to riders? Plan B wildly assumes local communities would be able to create, fund and run a passenger-only ferry system when the Washington State Ferry system got out of that business. Passing the buck to other communities by recommending an unfunded mandate isn't the answer. And we're supportive of the passenger-only ferry concept.

We cannot support the current plans which don't recognize the fact that ferries are part of the state highway system and need to be funded accordingly. If additional funding is necessary, there should have been a recommendation for funding sources other than continuing to constantly increase ferry fees for riders who on the Edmonds-Kingston run are already covering their operating costs.

Thank you.



James and Pam Dzama  
12078 NE Jefferson Pt. Rd.  
Kingston, WA. 98346

Washington State Ferry Public Meeting  
January 14, 2008 Kingston, Washington

*Dave De Bruyn*

My name is Dave De Bruyn and I frequently ride the ferries but am not technically a commuter

I want to make three points

1. On plan B. Advisory commissions to the ferry system have recommended the system recover 80% of the costs and Plan A does that. Plan B recovers a larger percentage of the cost. If you want to recover more than 80% of the costs why not put a moratorium on fare increases until we get back to the 80% level?

One of the problems with Plan B is that it drops the extra summer boat for Kingston. We have a lot of congestion and are going to have more. The Kingston run and the extra boat pay for themselves or at least more so than any other run. We need to keep the extra summer boat. This third boat could be used in lieu of bigger ones for off peak runs saving operational money.

2. We need more boats. The first new one for the Port Townsend – Keystone run is shortly to be built using the design for a boat built for service in Martha's Vineyard. That boat was bid out nationwide in 2006 and built for \$32 million. The Washington State Ferry system changed the design to reduce cost but insisted on issuing a Washington State only bid so we will pay \$65 million. Oh what we could not have done with \$30 million!

And worst we do not qualify for federal subsidies or stimulus money when bids are not offered nationwide. Hey as soon as we can issue bids NATIONWIDE, we could offer the new administration the chance to build new ferries. We have the plans; the keels could be laid pronto. We need more boats.

3. Fare increases have been held to 2 ½ percent each year. Apparently this is coming up for reconsideration by Transportation Commission this year. I want you to convey the strong message that increases in excess of 2 ½ % need to be taken off the table, especially given the economic times and low rate of inflation.

The WSF plan also states frequent user tickets may have to come up for reconsideration based on "congestion pricing principles." Working people, the heart of our economy in Kitsap County, need the frequent user ticket system.

WA State Ferry Meeting Kingston 1/14/09

Is anyone besides The Seattle Aquarium and

The Point Defiance Zoo Aquarium

plucking specimen samples

from Edmonds waters at the old Un<sup>2</sup>ical Site?

Will their origin be labeled as such when on display?

Is the property previously designated for the

proposed (now failed) Edmonds/Kingston Terminal 'move'

currently wholly owned by WA State Ferries?

Might it be given back to the town of Edmonds?

Might it be returned to public and wildlife good ....

through land donation, conservation easements or leasing?

Puget Sound Shore Stewards provides an informed description

of such ongoing efforts and opportunities in the Skagit & Snohomish County

Dec. '08 Shore Stewards News, issue No.15

Written by Cheryl Lovato-Niles, Whatcom Co. S.S.

(Complete with internet resources to learn more.)

### **Insufficient time for Plan Review**

The comment period ending Jan 21<sup>st</sup> does not allow sufficient time for are view of the plan by local governments. The draft plan was available to the public on Dec 21 with the supporting Appendices released a week afterwards. While some aspects were well know LOS measures and levels were not nor were the proposed service cuts. The Christmas and New Year's holidays as well as snow conditions further reduced time available for staff review. With Kitsap hearings ending on the 14<sup>th</sup> and local leaders attending the presidential inauguration on Jan 20<sup>th</sup> our county's leadership will not have an opportunity to consider effects that the numerous and significant proposals in this plan nor provide their response. Legislators should have the benefit of local reviews of the plan when it is presented to them.

### **Service**

I support continuing the current ferry service as described by Plan A and are strongly oppose to the service cuts proposed by Plan B for the Kitsap Peninsula

*A third summer boat should remain under consideration for Kingston in the future. The impact of Plan B has not been assessed nor have our local governments had the opportunity to consider them and the means by which local service will be funded. We question the savings and value of reducing night service on a run which both operates at a positive return and which also is the major cross-sound transportation route to the Olympic peninsula*

#### **Discussion**

An overflow summer boat has been in previous WSF Plans and has been successfully operated on numerous occasions. We estimate that a third, smaller, summer overflow boat would not only help meet demand but also operate at a profit.

Marine highways should not be cut in the growing Puget Sound region. We only get 89 cents back for each transportation tax dollar we pay while two thirds of Washington counties get more back than they pay. On Kingston-Edmonds a Jumbo ferry loses money when less than about 35% full. This happens on about 5% of summer runs, 8% of fall runs 16% of winter runs. Given work rules any savings by eliminating evening runs will likely evaporate. A large portion of Kingston's traffic is destined for the Olympic peninsula this includes freight traffic. Instead of eliminating evening runs to reduce costs WSF should address practices to provide incentives to shift this traffic to night sailings when congestion is lower. WSF should also station the smaller WSF back-up in Kingston and use it for low demand runs instead of the Jumbo ferries.

### **Passenger only Ferries**

While I applaud WSF's inclusion of Passenger only ferry service in the plan and strongly recommend that the plan also include proposals for supporting passenger ferries.

*Passenger only ferry service should be enhanced to support future ferry demand but not at the expense of cutting back essential vehicle service. The Plan should identify how WSF will work with passenger ferry providers to support implementation of this service. This should include coordination of fares, facilities and state funding options.*

#### **Discussion:**

The fares charges on state ferries directly affect the financial viability of passenger ferries. If as described in the plan WSF passenger fares drop considerably below the cost of the service, local passenger ferries will be unable charge fares that cover their costs. The one-way passenger fare system on state ferries also is a significant barrier to recovering costs for a passenger system. The publically owned docks that can accommodate passenger ferries should be made available to locally operated passenger ferries. Currently

King County is provided ferries at no cost. The state should also provide assistance to the Kingston run to facilitate the startup. We believe that the success of a Kingston run will be instrumental to follow-on passenger ferry services.

### **Reducing Kingston's Traffic Congestion**

I strongly recommend proposals in the Plan to reduce Kingston's downtown congestion in addition to the proposed reservations system.

*While reservations may provide an ultimate solution near term action is needed to address Kingston's summer traffic congestion. While this may be substantially addressed in the future by reservations the action recommended by the joint WSDOT/WSF/Kitsap Public Works/Kingston Community Task force should be included in the Plan.*

#### **Discussion**

We strongly support taking near-term action to reduce ferry traffic congestion in Kingston. This includes reservations and the interim use of an existing parking lot as an auxiliary holding area.

The impact of ferry traffic on Kingston is one of the, if not the most, severe traffic impacts in the system. As ferry traffic runs through the center of Kingston's business district, summer traffic can make our downtown all but inaccessible. Queues of cars with running engines also create air quality problems. Kingston has two routes into town. When summer traffic exceeds the shoulder holding capacity the primary access road into town is shut down leaving the only other access by a circuitous local street. Stopped ferry traffic in SR 104's traffic lane is a safety hazard as well as stranding riders in areas with no public facilities. For these reasons a near term solution is needed.

Reservations will solve much of this problem. There will need to have a substantial part of the boat unreserved as well. The current holding lot has about 1 ½ boat capacity. We believe that a 2 boat capacity is needed. This can be easily achieved by the use of an existing parking area as an auxiliary holding lot.

While we strongly support improving the ability of bus transit to access the Kingston terminal we believe that this can be done through the traffic controls and improved procedures in the current holding lots. We question the need to move a tollbooth to allow bus access. We believe that this \$1.4M funding would be better used on the traffic controls needed for an auxiliary holding lot as the current lines of cars backing up into town with their engines running results in clogged streets, unhappy riders and local citizens, as well as significant waste of resources (fuel and time).

### **Fares**

I strongly support WSF's proposal to keep ferry fares affordable as follows:

*Limiting fare increases to a maximum of 2 ½% per year. Fare increases should stop when an 80% system recovery rate is reached*

#### **Discussion**

Fare increases have a negative impact on the mission of the ferry system. The large fare increases over the last 7 years have eliminated use by many riders and have had an adverse effect on our community and the region. Although we conditionally support riders continuing to share proportionately in operating cost increases even those increases will be difficult for our community while employment and wages remain stagnant. We think that WSF should be able to control cost increases within inflation. The improved utilization of assets and ridership growth should, as described in the 2006 plan, should result in significant long term revenue growth.

An 80% recovery rate was recommended by both the Legislative Joint Task Force (JTFF) and the Blur Ribbon Commission (BRCT).

### *Continuing the current rate of fare discount for frequent users*

We are concerned that the Plan suggests they may be eliminated in the future

#### Discussion:

The continued use of discounted fares for commuters and frequent users is essential to our communities. North Kitsap residents depend on frequent ferry use for employment, school and access to specialized services. Kingston's car commuters pay about \$4,500+ per year in fares. Eliminating their frequent user fares is a 40% increase. This puts the transportation costs of median income commuters well above the "red flag" used by budget counselors. Without frequent user fares for car commuters, the ferry system would be affordable only to workers making over \$100K/yr, or 5% of our county. This is questionable public policy. It's been commented that ferry commuters should pay more for using a "scarce resource". As it is only commuter routes that pay their way, arguably then it's the commuters' revenue that provides the ferry "resource" for occasional riders to use.

### I support positive pricing incentives and strongly oppose negative pricing strategies:

*Incentive strategies to improve ferry utilization such as full car discounts, car pools, small vehicle discounts, incentives to foot passengers and reducing the gaps between ferry and transit service will reduce costs and benefit riders. Peak hour pricing, non-resident pricing and increased summer fares will not provide benefit while substantially increasing cost to riders. There had not been an assessment made of their impact to ferry riders and communities to consider as required by the RCWS.*

#### Discussion

Peak pricing and increased summer fares would impose significant costs on our riders and community without benefit. The plan does not consider the impact that these negative pricing strategies only have on ferry riders and on our community.

The concept that peak fares will shift riders to off peak times assumes there are meaningful "off peak" times that riders can shift to. This does not occur in Kingaton. In the summer, our Kingston-Edmonds congestion doesn't taper off until about 10PM. During the rest of the year the predominant peak traffic direction on the Kingston-Edmonds run follows the workday. It's eastbound in the morning and westbound in the evening. Peak pricing cannot expect to change these directions nor should it expect to shift ferry riders to night work.

Peak pricing will disproportionately target fare increases on commuters who not only pay the most into the system but who also have the least flexibility in their travel. For example, eliminating the use of frequent user fares during peak hours would raise a commuter's ferry costs to over \$6,000 per year. Workers do not drive by choice. As shown by WSF's Origin and Destination survey more workers are driving because they must use cars in their work and because their worksites have become more dispersed

Likewise we oppose increased fared in mid-summer. This will only add to riders' cost while not reducing congestion.

Kingston is a major tourist route and discriminatory fare practices for non-residents would discourage this. It would also be a questionable practice should WSF apply for federal funding. The complexity of implementation would likely outweigh any revenue gains

### **Reservations**

#### I support reservations, without charge, to reduce congestion and improve ferry utilization

*The concerns of ferry riders must be addressed. An joint working group of WSF and community representatives should be established for the implementation of reservations in Kingston*

#### Discussion:

Commuters and business riders are concerned that reservations will be cumbersome to use and will impede their regular use of the system. Without a priority for these riders in making reservations, they

fear that they would find themselves unable to get to work or conduct business especially during our summer traffic periods. Local, infrequent riders are concerned that they will not be able to respond to unplanned needs such as births, deaths or sudden illness due to the lack of space available for non-reservation customers. All are concerned that events such as traffic delays, weather and bridge openings could prevent riders from making their reservation without the recourse of a later boat or refund of pre-payment. The reservation system design should also facilitate movement of freight throughout the region.

We strongly support a new and more efficient working relationship between WSF, our local governments and the FACs for the implementation of reservations on Kingston-Edmonds. While the success of reservations at the Anacortes-BC and Port Townsend routes are promising starts, implementation here will involve many times the traffic and will present significant new challenges.

### **Level of Service**

No action should be taken on the Level of Service Standards identified in the plan without the full involvement of local governments and communities.

*A revised method of assessing "level of service" and route specific standards has not yet had a review by local governments and community representatives. As there is no need to revise these standards until after reservations are implemented there is ample time for their thorough review and consideration by the affected communities. The RCW requirements for review of LOS changes have not been met*

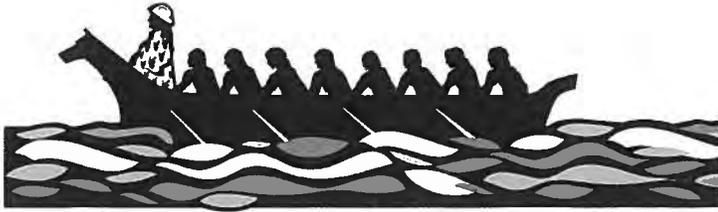
Discussion We strongly support the direct participation of local governments in developing and assigning Level of Service standards. LOS standards have a critical impact on communities. The new LOS proposals were released on Dec. 21st without the background analysis. To date there has been little or no involvement of local governments in determining new standards. When the LOS standards were last revised local governments had a pivotal role in the process. We think that engaging local governments in developing LOS standards will be absolutely essential to the success of this planning process. That this has not yet occurred is of great concern to us.

### **Fuel Surcharge**

We support fuel surcharges as described in that it should only reflect changes in the cost in fuel and not be simply an increased fare.

*While fuel surcharges be added when fuel exceeds the fuel cost projections on which fares are planned and they should be eliminated when fuel costs go down. With the fuel charge fare increases should not increase beyond 2 ½% per year*

*Walter M. Elliott  
Kingston WA*



FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

360/598-3311

Fax 360/598-4666

---

## THE SUQUAMISH TRIBE

P.O. Box 498 Suquamish, Washington 98392

January 26, 2009

David H. Moseley  
Assistant Secretary  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
WSDOT Ferries Division  
2901 – Third Avenue, Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98121-3014

SUBJECT: WSF Draft Long Range Plan

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Mosely:

Thank you for the opportunity to review WSDOT Ferries Division's Draft Long Range Plan (LRP). Most of WSF's facilities and operations are located within the Suquamish Tribe's usual and accustomed fishing grounds and stations (U&A, which include all waters of Puget Sound from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Canadian border, including Hood Canal). Within its U&A, the Tribe exercises treaty-reserved rights to harvest fish and shellfish. Increasing commercial and recreational vessel traffic can impact the Tribe's ability to safely and effectively carryout its treaty-reserved fishing rights. In addition, docks, piers, terminals, and other in-water facilities can directly and indirectly (with associated operations) displace tribal fishing activities.

The Tribe recognizes WSF's obligation to develop service and capital programs that support a growing Puget Sound population and that ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the State's ferry system, however, the Tribe requests that WSF consider direct coordination and consultation with area tribes as the Draft is further revised and finalized so that tribal specific concerns and requirements are fully represented in the Final LRP.

Thank you for considering the Tribe's comments on this initial Draft LRP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Ostrom", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Ostrom

Cc: Phillip Narte, WSF

Joy

**Welch, Barb**

**From:** Aldridge, Jo  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2009 5:10 PM  
**To:** Moseley, David  
**Cc:** Welch, Barb  
**Attachments:** Please support Rep. Rolfes' ferry legislation; Please support Rep. Rolfes' ferry legislation

This is Jo. . .here are two e-mails Paula has received. . . .so far.

**Welch, Barb**

**From:** soundofmind@comast.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2009 11:20 AM  
**To:** WSF Planning  
**Cc:** Hammond, Paula; Moseley, David; Deardorf, Ray; Satran, Jill; haugen.marymargaret@leg.wa.gov; clibborn.judy@leg.wa.gov; debblester@yahoo.com; elliotmoore@comcast.net; seaquist.larry@leg.wa.gov; appleton.sherry@leg.wa.gov; rolfes.christine@leg.wa.gov; rockefeller.phil@leg.wa.gov  
**Subject:** Please support Rep. Rolfes' ferry legislation

Dear Ferry Planners:

I am writing to support legislation by Rep. Christine Rolfes to repeal or alter the Jones Act that is keeping us from getting bids nationally to build ferries. This outdated law limits us from receiving any federal funds to build ferries because federal funding requires a national bidding process. With President Obama stressing investing federal funds to rebuild infrastructure, repealing or altering the Jones Act would position us to be able to receive funds and build ferries sooner rather than later -- and most likeley at a significant savings to taxpayers.

Please save our ferry system!

Sincerely,

Tom Menzel  
5570 NE Admiralty Way  
Hansville, WA, WA 98340

**Welch, Barb**

**From:** katyahiggins@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 21, 2009 11:25 AM  
**To:** WSF Planning  
**Cc:** Hammond, Paula; Moseley, David; Deardorf, Ray; Satran, Jill; haugen.marymargaret@leg.wa.gov; clibborn.judy@leg.wa.gov; debblester@yahoo.com; elliotmoore@comcast.net; seaquist.larry@leg.wa.gov; appleton.sherry@leg.wa.gov; rolfes.christine@leg.wa.gov; rockefeller.phil@leg.wa.gov  
**Subject:** Please support Rep. Rolfes' ferry legislation

Dear Ferry Planners:

I am writing to support legislation by Rep. Rolfes to repeal or alter the Jones Act that is keeping us from getting bids nationally to build ferries. This outdated law limits us from receiving any federal funds to build ferries because federal funding requires a national bidding process. With President Obama stressing investing federal funds to rebuild infrastructure, repealing or altering the Jones Act would position us to be able to receive funds and build ferries sooner rather than later -- and most likely at a significant savings to taxpayers.

Please save our ferry system!

Sincerely,

Kate Higgins  
5570 NE Admiralty Way  
Hansville, WA, WA 98340

## **Vickie L. Mercer**

10025 SW 122<sup>nd</sup> Pl. Vashon, Washington 98070  
206-550-3914 or 206-497-9031

January 25, 2009

Mr. David Moseley, CEO  
Washington State Ferry System  
Seattle, Washington 98101

Dear Mr. Moseley,

Every ferry user owes you a significant amount of gratitude for your willingness to listen to our many concerns. Thank you for extending the time for comment to the Long Range Plan allowing for my submission. I sense that your job is similar in challenge to that of our new President as our legislature in recent years has neglected to give WSF the monetary support necessary to maintain a most prestigious transportation asset.

With the 2009 legislature's motto being "One Washington" I find it disturbing that transportation decisions have come down to "take away from a few to give to the masses". We now see new massively expensive plans for a deep bored tunnel emerging from the same Governor's office that just cut ferry service on the south end of Vashon that will prevent working people from getting to their jobs, permanently assigning the Hiyu which is in no way ADA compliant. As a resident of Vashon I object to any additional reductions of ferry service to a community that has grown by 11% over the past ten years and has already sustained 18% reductions of service during the same period. All 13,000 who live on Vashon have built their futures around the WSF ferry system after the continued encouragement of our State's legislature promoting an economy in our community.

I can not understand how Plan B could materialize as it would result in the death of every Vashon business and working person's ambition and well being. Plan B would destroy the last 30 years of growth. Plan B would not even provide service for the equivalent population of 7500 people. Vashon resident Judy Whitney said several years ago "Ferry planners need to be mindful of the power they have to enhance or stifle the communities they serve and to influence the character of those communities by the transportation decisions they make." I believe we are at that crossroads.

I truly believe that "Plan B" does not follow the premise of "equal cuts for all". Plan B is the equivalent of letting the bank on Vashon fail, foreclosing the house and evicting the inhabitants. It is as impersonal and cold as wishing the Katrina victims would drown.

As the idea of "Plan C" is gaining momentum, I truly hope that a serious look at "fairness" will gain strength. If there must be cuts, let them be across the board and shared by all. If there must be actions for the "Common Good", let all legislators look deep into their soles to see if their cuts equal their neighbors. So, you can see why everyone who is associated and cares about their fellow citizens who live on Vashon must fight "Plan B" in these days of "One Washington".

Thank you for your time and I trust my comments will be added to the multitude of others voicing concern for our ferry system's future.

Sincerely,

Vickie Mercer  
Vashon Resident

Cc: Senator Joe McDermott  
Senator Derik Kilmer  
Representative Sharon Nelson  
Representative Eileen Cody  
Representative Larry Seaquist  
Representative Sherry Appleton  
Representative Christine Rolfes

January 21, 2009

Washington State Ferries  
Attn. Joy Goldenberg  
2901 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98121

Re: Draft Long-Range Plan

Dear Ms. Goldenberg,

As part of our on-going collaborations with Washington State Ferries to reduce ferry-related air emissions, the Clean Air Agency appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Long-Range Plan for the Washington State Ferry system. Our region faces serious challenges to improving our air quality and protecting the global climate. We support the Plan's emphasis on demand management, as opposed to capacity expansion, to meet future needs because of the positive role that demand management strategies can play in reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gases, both of which contribute to air pollution and adversely impact global climate.

The Plan can be a positive force for meeting the Governor's greenhouse gas and VMT reduction goals. It can be improved by addressing climate change and air quality and explicitly examining how the Plan strategies affect ferry-related emissions. For example, improved transit service and pedestrian connections can help reduce VMT by reducing the number of vehicles boarding the ferries. Considering customer travel distances to terminals when investigating ferry service changes can avoid increases in emissions resulting from people traveling farther to a alternate terminal. Implementing demand management strategies such as tolls and HOV lanes on the state-operated roads connecting ferry terminals can supplement the emission-reducing effects of the Ferry system's demand management strategies. And technological improvements to engines, cleaner fuels and improved docking methods can directly reduce harmful emissions from routine vessel operations.

The strategies in the plan can be strengthened through coordination not only with transit agencies but with local governments, such as the cities and counties in which ferry terminals lie; regional transportation agencies, such as METRO, Kitsap Transit, Community Transit, and Pierce Transit; and regional agencies such as the Puget Sound Regional Council. Growth management strategies such as transit and pedestrian-oriented development complement the Plan's demand management strategies. But to be effective in maximizing the potential air quality and climate protection benefits, the coordination needs to be continuous

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Dennis J. McLerran

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**BREMERTON**  
Cary Bozeman, Mayor

**EVERETT**  
Ray Stephanson, Mayor

**KING COUNTY**  
Ron Sims, Executive

**KITSAP COUNTY**  
Jan Angel, Commissioner

**PIERCE COUNTY**  
John Ladenburg, Executive

**PUBLIC AT LARGE**  
Marina Cofer-Wildsmith

**SEATTLE**  
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**  
Mike Cooper, Councilman

**TACOMA**  
Jake Fey, Councilman

from the development of this plan to design and operation of ferry system facilities, such as terminal design, pedestrian access, and coordination of bus and ferry schedules.

We can provide additional information and technical assistance to address the issues raised above. If you need additional information please contact Paul Carr of my staff at 206-689-4085 or [paulc@psc Clean Air.org](mailto:paulc@psc Clean Air.org).

Sincerely,



Dave Kircher  
Manager, Air Resources

Stephanie Buffum  
PO Box 376 Shaw Island, WA 98286  
[stephanie@sanjuans.org](mailto:stephanie@sanjuans.org)

January 15, 2009

RE: PUBLIC COMMENT ON WASHINGTON STATE FERRY PLAN

The Washington State Legislature and our Governor have the duty to ensure that the residents of rural counties receive that same transportation opportunities as other rural counties throughout the state.

The Washington State Ferry Plan the ("Plan") may be the most profound policy decision by an agency that will affect San Juan County for the next several decades.

Since I am working today, I am unable to participate in today's hearing in person. I appreciate your consideration of my comments encouraging WSF to adopt Plan A!

For eight (8) years, I have commuted on the WSF. Inter-Island Ferry for my work as the Executive Director of a county-wide environmental organization, FRIENDS of the San Juans. For the past five (5) years, my husband, who is an estate planning attorney provides pro-bono legal assistance on Orcas and Lopez Island has commuted on the Inter-island ferry. For the past four (4) years, my son (4 years) has joined me in my commute two days per week to attend childcare and now pre-school. We are an inter-island ferry dependent family. I have seen the retirement of the steel hulled Illahee, the reduction and then complete closure of the galley. What is unimaginable is the complete elimination of the Inter-island ferry.

The Inter-island ferry is our highway, it is the lifeblood to the community in which we live.

Having an Inter-Island boat locally available for emergencies and regular transportation is akin to having a state highway. When crossing the Straits is not possible, the local inter-island ferry is our backup.

This Plan does not address the long-run financial stability of WSF. Neither plan is financially balanced. Plan B has a significantly lower year 16 and year 22 deficit than Plan A (\$3.5 billion deficit with A, \$1.4 deficit with B).

The large dollars in the facilities are mostly identified for terminal improvements. The operational strategies are the primary tool used to limit capacity improvements. The use of a reservation system is the most productive tool to limit the need for expansion of terminal and vehicle storage areas. There are both improvement and preservation investments.

Patricia Pirnack-Hamilton  
James C. Hamilton  
213 Hamilton Drive  
Eastsound, Wa. 98245  
January 17, 2009

Mr. David Moseley  
Assistant Secretary of Transportation  
Wa. State Dept. Of Transportation  
Washington State Ferries  
2901 Third Ave., Suite 500  
Seattle, Washington 98121-3014

Dear Mr. Mosely,

It is with profound regret and frustration that we are writing still another letter to WSF. We have written many in the past to WSF, to State Representatives and to the Governor. We have gone to meetings held here on Orcas Island and been in contact with our County Commissioners, Council and the Ferry Advisory Committee. We just can not seem to get our plight of being a ferry dependent community understood or taken seriously by the Legislature or WSF. We have read the letter that our present County Council and FAC has written to you and agree with their assessment and endorse their letter. Once more we are faced with the real threat to our access of the state's highway system and the mis-management within the WSF. While we know that precious revenue was taken away from the Wa. State Transportation System and WSF by I-165 (which we did NOT vote for) we also can see how it seems to have affected WSF more so than public works projects within the state as a whole. The WSF responded by having ridership pay for operational costs through increased fares and decreasing service.

We agree with all the concerns expressed in the letter sent to you by our Council and the FAC and reject Plan B. We are operating on a less than acceptable way at the present time but we are at least coping with it. To take another ferry from the present run would be a terrific hardship. It would reduce us to just 3 ferries in fall, winter and spring and 4 ferries in the summer. Eliminating the Anacortes/San Juan Island/Sydney run would have a very real impact on the mainland capacity of island traffic. The Council states that 80% of the capacity in the off-season is assigned to domestic service. Plan B does not provide an emergency backup vessel for more than 5 years which is unacceptable nor does it address increased capacity in relation to vessel replacement. We still find it incredible that the WSF decided to scrap the 3 Electric Steel Ferries without public comment and for the ridiculous sum of 500K. We feel that the cost of building one new ferry would have most likely paid for all three of the ES ferries hulls to be replaced or re-enforced. To scrap those ferries seems like a terrible mistake and waste of tax payer monies. To make a decision of this magnitude also seems like a dis-service to the islands and runs dependent on those ferries.

Plan B will further economic hardship for the San Juan Islands. We already are feeling the impacts of the financial crisis. It will create major hardship for islanders who must rely on the

ferries. Plan B does not seem to take into consideration that we are totally ferry dependent. There is not even an Economic Analysis in Plan B! We rely on goods and services being delivered to the islands. We rely on the tourist industry to provide much of our economic needs. There is also not a transit system in place that adequately serves the islanders or tourist nor is there adequate parking solutions for walk-ons or for leaving cars on the mainland. Plan B assumes that some reduction in ferry capacity would be absorbed by passenger ferries operated by local entities rather than by the state. That is something our small economically strapped county could not possibly provide.

We would also like to go on record as being against a reservation system that would impose a fee. We would love to have a reservation system NON CHARGE for islanders but we don't see how that could be implemented. When we go off for a doctor's appointment we usually try and cram in visits to friends and shopping. To try and figure out which ferry we might make on the return would be very difficult to figure. It is a 5 to 6 hour ordeal or more to just get off Orcas Island and back when you take into consideration the time you must wait to make sure you make the ferry you need to leave on, the travel time and the wait to return. We are tired of hearing "that's the price you pay for living in paradise". We are a retired couple living on a fixed income. Jim bought this property in the early 80's and retired here in 1987. We started building our log house out of 200 trees that blew down in the 90/91 wind storm by HAND. It is a hardship to live here especially with health problems arising and surgeries needed. Is it simply WSF stance that we should just sell our property we have worked so hard to develop and move to the mainland because of the increased cost and hardship of getting to and from the mainland? The passengers using the ferries pay for 70% of the operating costs. This is not a viable or workable situation. It is our State Highway. It is up to the state to provide us transportation instead of penalizing us and transferring the cost to run the system on those who live here or visit here. We also urge the WSF to continue to provide inter-island travel free of charge. There are many residents who do not work on the island they live on or must travel to Friday Harbor for other needs.

In closing we hope you will reject Plan B and take our County Council and FAC letter to heart. Please realize that we are a ferry dependent community and county and are subject to different needs. It is time that the WSF and the State Legislature take this into consideration. Please have some realization of the economic hardships that Plan B would create. Please do not take yet another ferry from our route. Please consider our plight!

Sincerely,



Patricia Pirnack-Hamilton  
James C. Hamilton



January 21, 2009

Joy Goldenberg  
Washington State Ferries  
2901 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98121

Dear Ms. Goldenberg:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Washington State Ferries Draft Long Range Plan. Congratulations on formulating plan options that truly address the challenges WSF faces as demand increases, revenues drop and costs rise. While Sound Transit's interface with WSF is fairly limited, we have comments about two areas of common interest.

First, as you are aware, Proposition 1 authorizing the expansion of Sound Transit's regional transit system was approved by voters in the urbanized portions of Snohomish, King and Pierce counties in November 2008. The expansion plan, known as ST2, is a 15 year program that will make improvements in our light rail, commuter rail and regional express bus systems. Two of the projects funded in ST2 are commuter rail station improvements in Mukilteo and Edmonds, where our Sounder service to and from Seattle connects with ferry services from north Kitsap County and Whidbey Island.

At Mukilteo, ST2 includes funding for structured parking expansion for Sounder riders in conjunction with the WSF's Mukilteo Landing multimodal terminal project, which appears to be relatively fully-funded in both Long-Range Plan options. At Edmonds, ST2 includes funding for a new rail station, pedestrian bridge over the tracks and structured parking expansion for Sounder riders in conjunction with the WSF's Edmonds Crossing multimodal terminal relocation project. However, it appears that both Long-Range Plan options now propose to improve the existing Edmonds terminal location, not relocate a new multimodal terminal. It is unclear from the Long-Range Plan what specific improvements WSF proposes to make at the current Edmonds terminal with its proposed \$26 million investment, but it seems that if WSF and Sound Transit work together we could jointly make some significant intermodal access improvements there with our combined funds. We have not yet fully defined our investments or timing and Sound Transit stands ready to work with you to integrate our investments at both Mukilteo and Edmonds. We encourage WSF to consider in your Long-Range Plan how we can jointly plan, design and construct both WSF and Sound Transit investments in these facilities to leverage maximum improvement in access for both Sounder and ferry riders.

The second issue concerns how Sounder commuter rail and ferry service schedules can be better coordinated, as discussed in Section 10, Transit Enhancements and

**CHAIR**

Greg Nickels  
*Seattle Mayor*

**VICE CHAIRS**

Aaron Reardon  
*Snohomish County Executive*

Claudia Thomas  
*Lakewood Councilmember*

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Julie Anderson  
*Tacoma Councilmember*

Mary-Alyce Burleigh  
*Kirkland Councilmember*

Fred Butler  
*Issaquah Deputy Council President*

Richard Conlin  
*Seattle Council President*

Dow Constantine  
*King County Council Vice Chair*

Deanna Dawson  
*Edmonds Councilmember*

Dave Enslow  
*Sumner Mayor*

Paula J. Hammond, P.E.  
*Washington State Secretary of Transportation*

John W. Ladenburg  
*Pierce County Executive*

John Marchione  
*Redmond Mayor*

Julia Patterson  
*King County Council Chair*

Larry Phillips  
*King County Councilmember*

Paul Roberts  
*Everett Councilmember*

Ron Sims  
*King County Executive*

Peter von Reichbauer  
*King County Councilmember*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Joni Earl

Appendix F, Proposed Transit Enhancements by Terminal. WSF calls for better coordination of these schedules. While a good goal, there are some limitations that should be recognized to avoid building false expectations. Sound Transit's commuter rail schedule has been negotiated with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad (from whom we lease track space and time for our operation) to optimize both commuter rail and freight rail capacity. Our ability to modify those schedules to better coordinate with WSF operations is very limited.

Further, because Sounder connects with more than one WSF service we must prioritize which ferry connection to try to optimize. Sound Transit and WSF staff meet monthly to discuss how Sounder-ferry meets are occurring. Mukilteo is a higher priority for Sound Transit than Edmonds for two reasons: more Sounder riders come from the ferry there, and the roughly 30 minute headways of both Sounder and the ferry make it more straightforward to coordinate there without jeopardizing other schedule considerations like bus connections and work start/end times in Seattle. The current train-ferry connection in Mukilteo appears to be working well, though there is always room for improvement. In contrast, very few Sounder riders currently come from the ferry in Edmonds and the 40 minute ferry headway there makes it difficult to coordinate schedules without inhibiting other connections along the line, though at least two of our four daily Sounder round trips generally connect well in Edmonds. We encourage WSF to acknowledge these constraints in the Long-Range Plan discussion about ferry-transit schedule coordination.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to help shape the WSF's Long-Range Plan. We look forward to working with you in the future to create the most integrated ferry-transit system possible. Please call me at (206) 398-5292 or e-mail me at [matt.shelden@soundtransit.org](mailto:matt.shelden@soundtransit.org) if you would like to discuss any of these comments further.

Sincerely,



Matt Shelden, AICP  
Program Manager, Strategic Planning & Policy Development

cc: Ray Deardorf, WSF Planning Director  
Greg Walker, Chief Policy & Planning Officer  
Martin Young, Program Manager, Commuter Rail  
Mike Bergman, Program Manager, Service Planning  
Val Batey, Senior Planner

January 11, 2009

Dear David Moseley,

I implore you to hear me out.....We have lived on Vashon Island for several years and love it here...But recently, learning of possible, major cutbacks in the ferries, have us fearing for our future...Since we are entirely water-locked, unlike many of the other islands, we are at the mercy of the ferry system to transport us to the main lands...

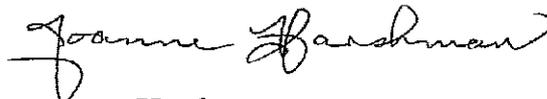
We all belong to the Washington Transportation System, pay our taxes for such and therefore feel entitled to equal benefits...It is vitally important for Islanders to have good service for: medical emergencies; travel to and from jobs; educational sources; commerce; repair companies; and others too numerous to mention...

We realize there are economic difficulties at this time, but we are not the cause and sometimes feel that we are being penalized... Might there be less expensive solutions? There is no need for fancy boats and food service is unnecessary on short runs... Can current boats be retro-fitted until new ones are built?

It will be impossible for us to function properly as a community, if we have less than three boats on the north end (Seattle) and the Hiyu is much too small for the Tacoma run...

This is a plea from me to you, to PLEASE do your best to protect us and provide us with a safe and dependable ferry system, in our great State of Washington!

Sincerely Yours, (from a native Washingtonian)



Joanne Harshman

9522 SW 268<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vashon Island, WA 98070  
206-463-7727  
e-mail: vashon2001@comcast.net

P.S.

I appreciated the meeting, January 7<sup>th</sup>  
on the Island - JH

Robert Shull  
PO Box 1850  
Vashon, WA 98070  
January 19, 2009

Washington State Ferries  
Attn: Joy Goldenberg  
2901 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98121

RE: Comments to Washington State Ferries Department of  
Transportation, Ferries Division, Draft Long-Range Plan,  
December 2008

Dear Washington State Ferries:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Ferries Division Draft Long-Range Plan*. We respect that this draft plan is developed under many constraints. I have read the transcript from the Vashon public hearing which contains qualitative statements which express valid and important concerns. I hope and trust my comments and quantitative concerns are taken constructively. There are important and serious issues that must be addressed before this draft plan is finalized. Key issues include incorrect data and analyses pertaining to Vashon-Maury Island and incomplete analysis of changes in operation. I have tried to be helpful by citing specific pages and sections and matching the organization of the plan.

Pages ES-2, ES-3, and 14 reference I-695 which was declared unconstitutional and not implemented. All references to this unconstitutional initiative should be removed from the document because it was the Washington State Legislature that enacted these changes to the budget, not I-695. Continuing to use it as a reason or excuse is inaccurate and misleading, and sets the tone for questioning other statements in the draft plan.

Page 16 discusses Vehicle Holding Sizing and states "There needs to be enough holding space in the paid area for one sailing worth of vehicles plus standby vehicles." Then on page 17, paragraph 4, it is stated that [the budget] "...has forced WSF to take a completely fresh look at both what it is doing and how it is doing it." However, I find nowhere in the draft plan any data, costs, or analysis of any alternatives to the present method of selling tickets, taking tickets, holding vehicles, loading vehicles and passengers, and discharging them efficiently upon landing. Without these basic elements of operation being considered, many of the basic tenets of the draft plan are without basis and the plan is unfortunately fatally flawed. Currently many terminals see activity once per hour, resulting in great inefficiencies of staff and facilities. This plan does not consider methods used efficiently around the world for ferry and transit systems allowing for selling and taking tickets aboard the vessel. If the plan is to spend \$45 million (page 53) on a reservation system, then these basic elements of operation along with potential revisions to operations must be considered.

Page 21 mentions freight and states that a qualitative effort was conducted. This may be adequate for those communities served by a bridge, but, this is certainly not adequate for

Vashon-Maury Island where there are no alternatives to the ferry. The public testimony at the hearing on January 7, 2009 stated freight service must receive further attention and emphasis. Vashon-Maury is losing businesses (K2 Corporation and others) due to the declining service levels of WSF. What is not considered in the plan, but should be, is the need for Island residents to make longer trips, including commutes, when jobs and shopping disappear on the Island. These resulting land use changes and increasing imbalance between jobs and housing go against the Washington State planning goals and Governor Gregoire's mission to reduce VMT (vehicle miles of travel), energy consumption and greenhouse gases. More complete analysis of freight service must be included for locations such as Vashon-Maury without alternative service options.

There are serious flaws and inconsistencies between Table 7 on page 32, Exhibit 14 on page 44, and data in the 2006 O&D Survey. The O&D Survey states in reference to the Rhododendron on page 8-137 that "...the vehicle capacity is 48 vehicles per vessels [sic], and these have remained the same since 1993..." Table 7 states that the peak hour demand is 75 vehicles and the 4 hour demand is 216 vehicles. Yet, Exhibit 14 shows Estimated Percent Sailings Full by Route at 0-1% for the Point Defiance-Tahlequah run. If even one run is over capacity, and WSFA alert information and personal observation confirms this, then this should be a minimum of 6%. It appears that at least two of the three sources of information are incorrect. This data and these tables must be corrected before the recommendations based upon this erroneous analysis are considered.

To clarify this issue, the vehicle capacity of the Rhododendron is closer to 60 vehicles than 48. For such an important study, WSF should show that it knows the capacity of each of the vessels. The WSF website had published the capacity at 65 autos in 1997 before modifications to the vessel. The peak hour demand is probably close to 75, as experience shows that two or more sailings each direction are over capacity. Exhibit 14 should therefore show a minimum amount of 12% for 2006 conditions. While the Hiyu is being substituted for the Rhododendron during January (a typically lower demand month) of 2009, there are WSFA alerts (even with an imperfect information system) showing delays of 90 minutes or more. This results in the addition of traffic to the already congested I-5 corridor (adding VMT, energy consumption, and greenhouse gases) and additional delays and overloaded sailings at Fauntleroy. Without quantitative analysis of Plan B, comments on the number of overloaded vessels run cannot be made. Qualitative analysis shows that WSF already sees the need to add runs to partially compensate for the inadequate capacity of the Hiyu.

Table 7 contains at least one other inconsistency that needs to be checked. It shows the 4 hour peak 2030 Walk-ons reducing from 272 in 2006 to 166 in 2030. This is opposite to increases on every other route and conflicts with all other available data. This appears to be a data/analysis flaw and not a typographical error as the same table shows the arrivals at Vashon reduce from 286 to 190 during this same time period. The draft plan must not be adopted until these serious inconsistencies in data and flawed resulting analysis are corrected.

Section 8, starting on page 39, discusses proposed changes to the Vehicle LOS (Level of Service) measures. The draft plan verbiage shows that both the current and proposed LOS

measures need adjustments by route to make sense. Although the new LOS measures combined with the current measures offer some improvement, they are not adequate to address the LOS experienced by the ferry users. LOS must address issues of travel time (including travel time and wait time), total energy consumption (not just ferry fuel, but costs of ferry users taking alternative routes, and idling in line waiting to load or late at night to stay warm due to long schedule headways), and emissions (toxic and greenhouse gases). These issues are important for other planning processes in the State. It is not explained why they are not addressed here. Delay per passenger is commonly used in planning and it should be used in these analyses so the ferry operation can be compared equitably with other transportation systems in the State. The LOS analysis must be able to measure impacts such as 2.75 hour headway mid-day at Point Defiance as well as the 1.50+ hour wait with the Hiyu on this run. The LOS should take into account those who cannot be served at the Pt. Defiance terminal and must drive an additional 45 minutes plus the additional delay time at Fauntleroy due to shifting of demand. This analysis should include also the additional VMT and private vehicle operational costs to use the terminal at Fauntleroy. At a minimum, these typical planning measures must be addressed for a valid comparison between Plan A and Plan B. There are capital cost differences shown between Plan A and Plan B, but no quantifiable service analyses for use in proper decision making.

Section 10, starting on page 49, discusses Operations. WSF is to be commended for including operations within the planning process. The plan to improve transit connections is good and admirable and appears in many statewide, regional, and local plans. However, without serious implementation standards and quantifiable measures it is not useful. I am a regular ferry passenger/bus rider. At least 10% of the time, the connection between ferry and bus is missed, resulting in a minimum 30 minute additional delay to my trip. I don't think this additional delay would be tolerated for very long by citizens traveling on other state transportation system facilities. In fact, many of my fellow riders transfer to the automobile mode when this happens and then stay with the auto mode whenever possible. This modal shift reinforces the need for comprehensive planning of the ferry system as a part of the entire State transportation system and a system-wide LOS measure. As stated in the paragraph above, the plan must take into account the total trip, interaction with all systems, and the total impact upon costs and the environment. The current draft plan shunts the responsibility to provide service to others without addressing the costs or impacts. This is neither adequate nor acceptable.

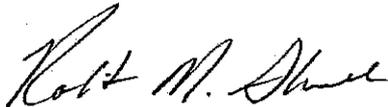
Vehicle Reservations, discussed in section 11 is novel, innovative, and has the promise of improvement for the user. However, before being adopted for an estimated cost of \$45 million, a more comprehensive analysis of costs and savings is required. How much does it really cost and save? If this is being discussed, it is imperative to examine the entire ticket selling, taking, loading, disembarking activity. This may result in staff reductions, holding capacity changes, and other operations and so may be unpopular, but it must be examined. Current practices result in inefficient labor distribution and system delays, leading to higher operations and capital costs. Operational improvements resulting from these improvements have the potential of providing a higher level of service for a lower cost. The estimated \$71 million allocated to improving dwell time (shown in Exhibit 24 on page 74) may not yield the benefits that could be achieved for lower cost through other operational changes. The last major improvement to the ticket booths

at Fauntleroy cost \$1 million and resulted in worse, rather than better, operation. Before reaching conclusions and spending money on a reservations system, the complete analysis must be performed.

When comparing between Plan A and Plan B, there is not a mention of the costs to retrofit the Hiyu to be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Also missing is any statement, analysis, or conclusion that additional operational costs are incurred to WSF because additional runs are required when using the Hiyu to partially compensate for the much lower vehicle capacity as compared to the Rhododendron.

It is an admirable goal that WSF intends to issue a completed plan within 10 calendar days of acceptance of final comments. I share a concern with many, who are dependent upon WSF, that this is insufficient time to adequately address the concerns raised in this letter and public testimony. The Washington State Ferry System has the power to seriously degrade or destroy the quality of life on Vashon-Maury Island. We need you to show us that you care enough to insure this plan and the underlying analysis is correct and complete so proper decisions can be made with a sound basis. I do hope my comments and suggestions are helpful in improving the draft plan and result in a better, more efficient, and cost effective Washington State Ferry System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Shull". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Robert M. Shull  
24505 Dockton Road SW  
PO Box 1850  
Vashon, WA 98070

Gregory J Beardsley  
16075 Crescent Drive SW  
Vashon, WA 98070  
January 20, 2009

David Moseley  
Assistant Secretary, Ferries  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
Seattle, WA

RE: Washington State Ferries Draft Long Range Plan

Dear Mr. Moseley;

I want to congratulate you on the changes that have been made within the Ferry System. Restructuring the System back to its core operations has gained positive support. In order for the Ferry System to move forward it must receive the necessary funding to do so. Since the early part of this decade the State Government has failed in its responsibility to provide stable funding to Washington State Ferries. Unable to plan for long term issues, such as new ferry boats, the Ferry System has been eating itself to maintain the best service it can.

Plan B is a non-starter. It is a total abdication of the duty of the State of Washington to continue to provide reasonable access. It also goes against the duty expressed when the Toll Bridge Authority took over the Ferry System from Black Ball. In no other part of the State are there proposals to drastically reduce the Highway System. Ferries are the Marine Highways of Puget Sound.

Plan A is better but it shortchanges the Marine Highway users. It too does not meet today's capacity requirements. Over the very short time it would be satisfactory. Longer term the lack of vessel replacement effectively reduces the capacity of the Marine Highway and puts it in the same category as Plan B above.

Under Plan A the Vessel Construction schedule is not sufficient to sustain the existing level of service. Building smaller vessels before the larger 144 vehicle vessels is not going to keep the current capacity at its level of use. The larger vessels far outnumber the small vessels. Constructing 64 vehicle ferries will not help when one of the tired 144's breaks down. With the construction timetable the current Ferry System is only a hair's breath away from a substantial reduction in capacity. At best that will continue for the next 3-4 years.

In 2002-2003 there was a need for construction of 144 vehicle class ferries. That need has not changed, yet no vessel has been put into service. Plan A calls for the construction of three 64 vehicle ferries before beginning construction of the 144 class. I believe the first 144 should begin immediately following the start of the 64. The State is under contract for one 64 and the 144 class vessels. Open up bidding nationwide and use Federal Money for the second and third 64 class vessel. This will provide needed vessels to keep the Ferry System operating at the level of the demand for service.

The State of Washington is not providing funding to the Marine Highways at the same level as sections of the land based highways. The I 90 Floating Bridge(1940) was replaced in 1990. The Hood Canal Bridge(1961) is being replaced and the I 520 Bridge(1963) and Seattle Viaduct(1953) are in the final planning stages. The latter two carry some 26 million vehicles a year, or about double the Ferry System. The bridge projects are receiving massive funding while Ferries are not receiving hardly any.

The Ferry System needs only a small, but stable, source of funding over the 22 year span of the Draft Plan to meet its needs.

I object to the rushed nature of this Draft Plan. Little to no vetting of the underlying facts has been done by anyone, much less the users. There is much speculation as to the accuracy of the survey data, which has not been seen by the public. Some of the assumptions, such as the vessels being 100% full, need to be examined. No other Highway is measured this way. No other highway users pay for the operation of the highway like the Marine Highway users. No other Highway has restricted hours of use like the Marine Highways.

Specific Route data is difficult to generalize. In both plans the Triangle Route is taking the brunt of either the cuts, or the neglect, in capacity. Terrible service and capacity has driven all but one large employer from Vashon. This in turn has forced more people to use the Marine Highway on a daily basis. Estimates and the Vashon Survey Results show over half the adult population, 40% of the users, are frequent travelers on the Route.

The Triangle Route Terminals are among the oldest, with little change since built in the 1950's. These Terminals have one of the highest throughput, with the least capacity in the System. Fauntleroy is estimated to be 600% of its design capacity. There is no passenger/vehicle separation and few amenities for the disabled. Vessels back up waiting for the single slip. Vessel capacity is such that Vashon Customers must wait while Southworth Customers drive around. This Route is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest for vehicle traffic and the single largest user of discount fares.

Exhibit 14 on page 44 of the Plan suggests that only a small number of sailings are "full", yet subjective measurement finds most vessels near or past capacity with overloads left on the docks. No consideration is given to the unique requirements of the Route to Position vessels for the commute demands. Similarly no consideration is given to allocation of space causing vessels to depart with space saved for the next terminal. The exhibit even shows less vessels being full in the summer when traffic is at its peak.

Where do we go from here? First the State must be reasonable with its tariffs on the users. A system wide fare box recovery of 70-80% is reasonable and historically has been the case. Regular and small increases in tariffs is acceptable. Continued funding of the core administrative and other operating costs is a must.

Second the State Leadership must Lead. Since 2000 the Legislature and the Governor have punted on the very necessary Capital Costs of the Ferry System. This abdication of leadership has put the Ferry System on the brink, or past, the point of collapse. A stable and predictable source of Funding replacing the legislatively removed MVET is the only way the Ferry System will survive.

This very well may mean that taxes will have to be raised. From the preliminary funding studies the best source for the least pain seemed to be a small MVET. This is One Washington. The tax base is large and monies can be used for other transportation projects. Better to tax ourselves a little than to pass the burden on at a much higher rate. One caveat is that the MVET is for capital transportation projects. Not busses, education and all manor of other things. This is what caused the uproar in 1999.

Lets move forward. Stable funding for the Marine Highways.

January 21, 2009

Mr. David Moseley  
Assistant Secretary, Ferries  
Washington State Department of Transportation

Re: WSF Draft Long-Range Plan

Dear Mr. Moseley:

The state ferry system in Washington is a key icon of our state - more popular than the Space Needle on tourist souvenirs; certainly one of our most popular tourist attractions. More than that, however, it is a key component of our economic vitality, and critical to the economic future of the counties that are served, directly or indirectly by those ferries. We represent the users of those ferries, the people that ride them every day. And we are very concerned about their future – and ours – by the direction expressed in this draft long-range plan.

Plan B results from a lack of leadership at the state level. It was developed at the last possible minute with no involvement from either the FACs or the local communities impacted by what is proposed. It makes significant cuts in service without considering how those cuts will affect those communities. It assumes that local governments will take up some of the slack by offering passenger only service, without estimating either the cost of such service or suggesting how such service would be funded. Despite repeated requests by the FACs, there has been no attempt, by WSF, the Transportation Commission, nor the Legislature, to evaluate the economic impact of either Plan A or B, although the impacts would be considerable, both at the individual as well as community level. It ignores the long-range growth plans of those communities, and despite the supposed integration of WSF with WDOT, it does not consider how the plan affects traffic patterns and growth.

For the last two years we have been told that this planning process would come up with a ferry system that could be sustained over the long term. Plan B does not do that. If the goal was to avoid the transfer of funds from the Transportation budget, it doesn't accomplish that; it still requires a transfer of \$1.4 billion from the DOT fund over the life of the plan. But it is also not sustainable from the standpoint of asset management. WSF currently operates a fleet of 20 owned and one leased vehicle ferry. The majority are 30 or more years old.

For the past year the Ferry System has operated on the thin edge. A large part of the time there have been no backup vessels available to fill in if there is a problem with a vessel. This means that most runs will have a 50%, or greater, cut in service should one vessel require emergency repairs. The Super, or old 144 class, vessels are 40 years old. The Elwha has already suffered a drive motor failure causing a 12 month outage. The Kaleetan has at least one drive motor that is failing. One can only guess at the status of the Hyak. Currently the Ferry system is rushing maintenance on the larger vessels to keep the ferry system afloat, but they are undoubtedly stretching the timeline on some maintenance. We are just a fraction away from a major impact. If we were to start construction today to replace the 144s, this risk will continue, and increase, for at least the next 3 years. To extend the construction schedule out any length of time places all ferry customers at risk. The recommendations of the Cedar River Group on vessel size and timing are unrealistic. They use a fleet comparison with North Carolina where the largest vessel is only marginally bigger than the Washington State Ferry's smallest vessel, and does not account for the fact that passenger service is highly regulated compared to cargo vessel service. Everything must be in order for the vessel to depart if it has passengers.

The building of new boats should take priority, and it doesn't in Plan B. After the completion of the Island Home boat that has already been contracted for, no new boats would be built until 2021! As described above, this is not sustainable.

We believe that actions can be taken to ensure that the needed boats are built:

1. Improve the efficiency of WSF, especially in regards to the design process for the boats. Much of this should be contracted out, with a smaller in-house staff, reducing the cost of the boats.
2. Shift priorities for capital expenditures to boats from terminals, except where terminal expenditures are needed for safety or for asset protection. For example, over \$22 million of terminal improvements related to transit are proposed for the Bainbridge terminal. None result in actually increasing transit service itself. Use that money to build new boats and enhance actual service.
3. Change the "Build in Washington" law to allow for out-of-state bids. This would not only increase competition, but also allow the state to use federal stimulus funds, reducing the impact on state funding.

The above actions can all be taken with no transfer of funds, but such transfer will still be needed, which brings us to the fact that the ferry system is part of the State Highway system, and deserves *sustainable* state support, as any other part of that highway system. We accept the need for reasonable fare increases of 2 1/2% per year, but additional funding is still needed. The Governor talked in her recent campaign of "One Washington", but on the west side of the Sound we are not feeling like that includes us. If you look at the allocation of highway funding, the counties on this side consistently give more than they get. To say "There is no money" begs the question. Did Paula Hammond respond in that manner when I-5 flooded, or I-90 was closed due to snow or mud slides? Are Bellevue residents told that when improvements to I-405 are planned? If the ferries are not going to get the support they need, the growth targets for Kitsap, Jefferson and Island Counties should be reduced, and residents and businesses should be encouraged to move away to eliminate the need for state support. Because in truth, that is the long-run effect of Plan B.

We suggest that WSF take more time to vet this plan with local governments before submitting it to the Legislature, and to involve them in a more collaborative process. But in any event, we do not believe that Plan B is sustainable, and we do not support it.

Signed:

Martha Burke  
Chair, FAC Executive

January 20, 2009

Dear Mr. Moseley,

Thank you for coming to Vashon Island to hear about my community's concerns regarding the Washington State Ferries Division Draft Long Range Plan. I would like to thank you for opening up the Ferry Division to more sunshine after many decades of darkness. I am the Vashon Island School District's representative to the WSF Ferry Advisory Committee, appointed by the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council.

On behalf of the Vashon Island School District, I would like to say that any reduction in ferry service or rescheduling that doesn't coordinate with our school schedule would be harmful to our mission of providing the best education possible to our children. Previous service reduction at Tahlequah has been harmful and incurred additional costs to our District. Previous rescheduling of the Vashon-Fauntleroy run has also had negative impacts to our District. Additional reductions in service or uncoordinated schedule changes at either end of the Island will cause further hardship, pain and financial costs to our School District, our students and our employees. The VISD has about 135 students that commute from Fauntleroy, Pt. Defiance and Southworth via the WSF system. These students are an integral part of our business model that allows us to be fiscally sound. We also have about 25 teachers, administrators and other staff that commute via the ferry to get to work. This number will be increasing as teacher's and other staff's wages don't keep up with the rise in the cost of living and fewer of our new teachers can afford housing prices on the Island.

Furthermore, any reduction in ferry service or rescheduling that doesn't coordinate with our school schedule would be harmful to our interscholastic co-curricular activities and field trips that enrich our students education. The other schools that we compete with in debate, band, athletics and math Olympiad, to name a few, are on the mainland and require taking a ferry as it is our only means of getting off the Island. Just as important is the fact that these other schools are also stressed when the difficulty level of travel to Vashon Island is made more difficult and costly.

In the late 1990's, as President of the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council, I worked with WSF in the formulation of the 1999 20-year Long Range Plan. That 1999 20-year Long Range Plan called for a second boat on the Tahlequah-Pt. Defiance run in the year 2012. The 2009 "Plan A" now calls for only one boat still in 2012 and beyond and a smaller capacity boat at that. In the 1999 20-year Long Range Plan the Vashon-

Fauntleroy run was to have larger boats as well. Now the 2009 "Plan A" doesn't call for capacity upgrades until 2017 or 2019. This major shift in policy after 10 years of a 20-year plan strains my faith in your understanding of the issues. The 1999 20-year Long Range Plan understood those issues. It took the bold, politically incorrect but accurate position that Vashon Island and the San Juan Islands have no other transportation options than the Washington State Ferries and that it is the responsibility of the State to address those needs. The document that expresses this is the "Plan C" alternative of the WSF 1999 20-year Long Range Plan that similar to the 2009 "Plan B" explores the what if of minimal funding. "Plan C" of the 1999 20-year Long Range Plan recognizes the fact that Vashon Island and the San Juan Islands are the number one priority for ferry service as they have no other options. It recognizes this by providing service only for Vashon Island and the San Juan Islands in the worst case scenario of minimal WSF funding from the State. You must accept this underlying principle also. The solely ferry-dependent communities of Vashon Island and the San Juan Islands should not have to share the pain equally with those communities that have other transportation connectivity options such as bridges and state highways.

Another cause for concern is that despite repeated requests for WSF to communicate and collaborate with the Vashon Island School District on changes in service levels or scheduling, it does not seem to happen as no one at VISD was contacted in formulation of this plan. I asked you myself at the last Island meeting that you attended if you would do this and you seemed to nod in agreement. Therefore, I ask again that you please keep in touch with us because ferry changes can have severe adverse impacts on the education that we provide our students. As we both know, the State's paramount duty is the education of our children.

Jake Jacobovitch

WSF Ferry Advisory Committee member representing the Vashon Island School District

P.O. Box 1624

Vashon Island, WA 98070

email: [VashonOne@aol.com](mailto:VashonOne@aol.com)

phone: 206.650.5253

January 20, 2009

Washington State Ferries  
Attn. Joy Goldenberg,  
2901 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98121

The Draft Long Range Plan published December 19, 2008, fails to adequately address the highway needs of communities served by the Washington State Ferry System, and fails to advance the economic interests of the State as is required of the highway system. Several specific areas are of concern:

- ◆ The quality of data and data analysis is suspect.
- ◆ Inappropriate conclusions appear to be drawn from the data presented.
- ◆ The Plan offers insufficient service for Vashon Island, which, unlike other communities in the State ferry system, has no transportation options other than ferry access.
- ◆ The Plan fails to consider the negative economic impact on specific communities and the State overall for failing to provide proper highway infrastructure.
- ◆ The proposed reservation system as a bromide for all locales is ill conceived and fails to address the need for increased deck space and vessel capacity. In its present form, the Draft LRP fails to fully analyze the critical operational details and challenges inherent in a reservation system, and it does not adequately consider the business process issues and increased costs attendant with such a system.
- ◆ Overall, the Plan lacks creativity and innovation in seeking solutions for providing adequate highway infrastructure for the economic well-being of Washington State. While the Draft LRP focuses on the specific objectives outlined in ESHB 2358, the overall objective of a long-range plan ought to be maximizing safe, cost-effective passage for all who need marine highway routes. Just as there are costs associated with, and investments needed in, land-based highway infrastructure, there are attendant costs for marine-based highways. The State needs to accept that such costs exist, develop a plan that really meets the growing needs of commerce, and endeavor to find creative funding solutions.

Attachment A articulates my concerns in detail and I encourage a thorough read.

The bottom line is that Option B is wholly inadequate for all routes served and compromises the long-term fiscal health of the state because it fails to protect the infrastructure necessary for vital commerce. It effectively advocates for the demise of intra- and inter- state commerce, the loss of viable businesses in ferry-served communities, and the eradication of marine highways to transport critical service personnel to their jobs at essential medical, utility, educational, retail, and business outlets. For Vashon Island alone, where I run a business and where my employees and family depend on all island routes for work, school, and medical care, I can attest to direct negative economic impacts to Pierce, King, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties, where residents travel regularly to reach jobs, schools, medical facilities, and conduct other business and recreational commerce. The leadership of these counties and their Chambers of Commerce should be outraged that such an option would even be suggested by the WSDOT. Option B warrants no serious consideration, but should it get it, then it needs to be accompanied by a detailed plan of how the government also plans to accelerate the closure of a large number of

agencies now funded by tax dollars since the businesses that generate the tax base for the State will suffer.

Option A of the Draft LRP does a better job of calling for infrastructure maintenance and improvement, but not at the level fully warranted. Moreover, it focuses primarily on using existing business models and transit points, ignoring innovative approaches to making the marine highway system a more efficient and cost-effective partner in commerce. Where new solutions are suggested, as with the reservation system or increased dependence of public transit partnerships, the Plan does not take into account the real-world operational and partnership challenges, or the recurring costs, associated with such suggestions. Ultimately, such approaches distract from the real need to improve the state highway system to accommodate the State's inevitable growth in population. In the end, one wonders why proposed pre-I-695 improvements would not be the starting point for long-range planning consideration, with rigorous cost-benefit analysis and creative funding approaches the focus of WSDOT and legislative efforts. For Vashon Island, a reduced 2-boat schedule again fails to address the growth that is projected by the Plan's own data. One wonders how a plan can be submitted that fails to address real growth needs.

I encourage the Governor, legislature, and WSDOT, to engage in a multi-county, business-focused approach to meeting the needs for more highway infrastructure (both land-based and marine). The December, 2008, Draft LRP is a good starting point for discussion and innovation, but is a poor solution in its current form and will not receive support from citizens who truly know the daily issues of marine transit. The next step is for all neighboring counties, cities, and business organizations to partner in developing plans with the residents of the ferry-served communities and WSDOT. A one-size-fits-all approach is an inappropriate premise for discussion. The discussions and objectives must be sensitive to the real, diverse, and unique needs of each of the ferry-served locales, and focus on how proper infrastructure advances commerce. Only then can the State have any hope of creating a well-synchronized, synergistic transit and highway solution that provides for more, not less, economic growth and stability for its citizens.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gylland  
9910 SW 260<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vashon, WA 98070  
206 463-9464

Enclosure: Attachment A, detailed analysis

cc: Vashon-Maury Island Community Council  
Christine Gregoire  
Dow Constantine  
Joe McDermott  
Sharon Nelson  
Eileen Cody  
Bill Baarsma  
Ron Sims  
Greg Nickels  
Kitsap County Board of Commissioners  
The Seattle Times  
The Tacoma News Tribune  
The Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber  
The Vashon Island Chamber of Commerce  
The Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce

## **Attachment A: Analysis re: Draft Long Range Plan, dated December 19, 2008**

### **Quality of Data and Data Analysis:**

At a macro level, the Plan does not align data to each of the specific ferry routes. The actual number of surveys received for each specific ferry route appears not to be referenced in the on-line documents I reviewed. Instead, percentages are used for summary purposes. There is no indication of how many responses from the total survey sample were received for each route. Yet, buried, as a footnote to Table 5.5.a is a footnote that survey "samples for the South and island routes are too small to support reliable estimates." The Plan suggests that some 13,000 surveys were received, but there is no indication of how many of the annual 23 million rides they account for, or with which routes they are affiliated. This immediately calls in to question the validity of the data and conclusions drawn there from.

Further, it appears that data is wrongly manipulated in the Plan analysis. In Table 4.4c of Appendix D, for example, growth projections for vehicle capacity are artificially adjusted downward to factor out recreational growth, thereby distorting the overall growth in ridership demand through 2030. Such tactics lead to poor assumptions for the planning process, and do a tremendous disservice to the economic forecasting for the state, which must continue to rely on tourism and accommodate recreational business as a significant component of the overall economic health of the state and its tax base.

### **Improper Conclusions Drawn from Data:**

Curiously, the Plan ignores what the data presented suggests and instead draws inappropriate conclusions. For example, looking only at Vashon Island routes, the Pt. Defiance – Tahlequah route boasts approximately 40% the vehicle capacity of the Vashon-Fauntleroy route during peak PM periods. Yet, ferry service on Pt. Defiance-Tahlequah is not provided at 40% of the level of the Vashon-Fauntleroy route today. Indeed, there has been plenty of criticism about the lack of a midday sailing on that route, and about the use of the smaller Hiyu vessel. Still, Option B of the Draft LRP suggests cutting service on that route even further, providing for no growth in the future. Plan A, on the other hand, provides for a new Island Home Class vessel w/ capacity for 64 vehicles (which, depending on how capacity is measured for the Rhododendron, may represent no net gain in vehicle capacity). The data argues for more vehicle and seating capacity on the Pt. Defiance-Tahlequah route, yet the Plan posits an option that does not allow for that. This recurs throughout the Draft LRP.

Pierce County has done an exceptional job of creating infrastructure for accommodating growth in the city of Tacoma. One need only look at the major highway construction completed in Tacoma over that past ten years without disruption to see that the City understands its future. The new bridge to Gig Harbor has virtually alleviated traffic congestion on Route 16, and its interchanges went in seamlessly. Retail and medical services in Tacoma now equal those of Seattle, and the Tacoma traffic, parking, and highway routes have much more flexibility. For these reasons, Pierce County is fast becoming a destination of choice for Vashon residents. Kitsap County and Gig Harbor are investing similarly in retail and medical infrastructure, in preparation for growth on the peninsula. As the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement gets underway, and the congestion of West Seattle increases because of inadequate highway infrastructure in that community, more Vashon residents will look to Tacoma and Kitsap counties for retail and medical options. That warrants more, not less, service on the Pt. Defiance-Tahlequah run. The Hiyu has inadequate capacity for commercial vehicles and insufficient seating for walk-ons. My sons commute daily from Vashon to Tacoma for school and report having to sit on the floor of the Hiyu in the peak PM periods due to insufficient seating on that vessel. The Rhododendron or a new Island Home Class vessel is the minimal necessity today. Greater frequency of runs mid-day in the future may accommodate for some increased growth on this route, but less ferry capacity is certainly not an

option. As King County struggles to deal with highway overload in its West Seattle, downtown, and I-5 corridors, it needs to partner with Pierce and Kitsap counties to assure that WSDOT provides sufficient ferry alternatives for economic growth in all neighboring areas. In that way, no one county carries burdensome traffic, capital and maintenance costs, all counties benefit financially from commerce, and tax payers can conduct business in the most convenient way possible.

#### **Negative Economic Impact to Island and off-island communities:**

The negative impact from insufficient infrastructure as it relates to Pierce County has been articulated above. Overall, insufficient highway infrastructure has a negative impact on economic growth for the State and the region. The implementation of the interstate highway system in the 1950s led to unprecedented prosperity and growth in commerce because goods and services were accessible to all. Even today, those areas of greatest growth in the United States at large and Washington State in particular, are in those locations where electricity, water, and highway infrastructure were relatively late in coming (i.e. West Texas, Issaquah plateau in Washington State, areas immediately east of Snoqualmie, etc.). Communities like Vashon Island and Bainbridge have highly educated populations with a mix of high and low-wage jobs. These communities can leverage virtual-based business technology and grow new, green industries, but only if the fuel, food, business couriers, and other essential service providers these communities depend on can conduct commerce without transit impediments. The Fortune 500 software company that I manage on Vashon employs 35 local employees (50% off-island, 50% on-island) and supports a payroll of \$ 2.3 M. We already subsidize public transit and ferry costs for our employees. Make it more difficult for our employees to return home from business travel or to get to-and-from their jobs, and you give our company more reasons to move those jobs out of state. With those jobs go the dollars that support myriad other commercial and non-profit organizations within the State. WSDOT needs to make it easier, not harder, for clean industries to thrive in all areas of Washington State. The Draft LRP flies in the face of that goal.

#### **Proposed Reservation System as Solution for All Locales is Inappropriate**

A fundamental assumption underlying the Draft LRP is the premise that by using a reservation system at all locales:

*"...a reservation system helps to move customers with time flexibility out of the peak to better distribute demand and increase asset utilization without requiring investment in additional vessels. Because a reservation system effectively moves physical queues out of the terminal, it significantly reduces the need for costly terminal expansion and reduces queuing impacts for communities. The transponder lanes are a key component of the system because they allow people to move through the system quickly, avoiding the need for more operating staff, shortening the lead-time that must be allowed for arrivals, and providing more customer convenience." (pp 75-76)*

A reservation system ignores the real issue at hand----insufficient ferry capacity. Appendix G of the Draft LRP provides inadequate operational detail or analysis of how such a reservation system will work, and under-estimates the real-world operational challenges that customers will face and the costs they will incur.

Some areas of concern:

*"...a reservation system helps to move customers with time flexibility out of the peak to better distribute demand and increase asset utilization without requiring investment in additional vessels"*— By the Plan's own admission, only 8% of those surveyed have some flexibility in shifting their travel time, and it is not clear on which routes those percentages apply. That is a very small minority number of travelers, so why invest heavily in hardware and operational changes to accommodate them? This will not resolve the issue of there being insufficient deck space for peak travel times and

commuters. Indeed, the reservation system redirects capital and operating dollars that might otherwise be used for the core need of vessels with more deck space.

*"...Because a reservation system effectively moves physical queues out of the terminal, it significantly reduces the need for costly terminal expansion and reduces queuing impacts for communities. The transponder lanes are a key component of the system because they allow people to move through the system quickly, avoiding the need for more operating staff, shortening the lead-time that must be allowed for arrivals, and providing more customer convenience."* The notion that somehow the focus should be moving physical queues is misdirected. Queues go away when vehicles have deck space on which to load. Having folks wait somewhere other than the dock masks the real problem.

A reservation system shifts more of the burden for travel to paying citizens without adding vessel capacity. Just as the WAV2GO system has made it difficult for family members traveling to different destinations to coordinate ticket usage, the reservation system adds overhead and real costs to customers without delivering added service value.

A telephone or on-line reservation system assumes that fixed and low-income families have income to spend on cellular access or Internet services, and if not, then the system is simply not accessible to them.

There are real issues with the traffic flow and loading areas at terminals even today. On Fautleroy Ave. in West Seattle, for example, the ferry system is challenged to load boats fed from a single traffic queue. How will it deal with multiple feeder lanes for reserved passengers heading to Southworth and Vashon, plus stand-by traffic, when there is already insufficient dock or road space in that terminal area to service one queue?

My island-based business needs its vendors and commercial purveyors to be able to load a vessel without a reservation---how is space for them protected and allotted? I needed emergency roof services after the recent storms. I rely daily on multiple deliveries from United Parcel Service and Federal Express. Why make doing business with ferry-accessed communities more difficult for service providers? Many vendors no longer come to Vashon because of the ferry expense---requiring reservations on top of that could make it even less desirable for purveyors who have several stops during a business day.

When a boat is off-schedule due to mechanical failure, where do the patrons from the first sailing wait? How do those arriving for the subsequent sailing queue up? Who gets to load on the next sailing---those who had reservations on the missed boat or those w/ reservations for the next boat?

When traffic in the city prevents me from making my reserved departure what happens to my paid fare? Can I use it later with or without a reservation? How far in advance must reserved passengers arrive at the terminal before their spot is given to a stand-by passenger?

When my doctor changes a scheduled medical appointment because of a problem at his office I need to take the make-up slot offered and cannot first check to see if there is space available on a ferry before accepting the medical appointment. Yet, there may be no way for me to actually get to my medical appointment if I am required to make reservations.

I'm returning from business or recreational travel via airport or road---traffic delays mean I cannot predict with accuracy the ferry vessel I need to take to reach my home----So, I have no assurance I can get home even as a stand by? That is ludicrous.

Who has to make reservations? What percentage of the vessels are allotted reservations? What determines priority? The answers to these questions will vary by locale, time of day, season, day of the week, etc. Why direct energies to managing that when what we really need are vessels?

There are several factors not taken in to consideration with the proposed ferry reservation system relative to other such reservations systems. The Washington State Ferry System has none of these attributes utilized by other transportation systems:

- ◆ Train systems can add cars to accommodate increased passenger demand yet still maintain the same schedule.
- ◆ Air travel generally offers multiple carriers to the same destination as well as multiple departure points for simultaneous scheduling of peak period traffic.
- ◆ Cargo and passenger transit for air and train travel do not rely on the same physical vessel for transport.

Where reservation systems work for other transit systems, there are severe limitations for ferries, particularly in those communities where ferry transit is the sole means of access to medical, essential business, airport, and other services.

The Draft Long Range Plan further asserts that:

*“The total capital costs of a reservation system are estimated to be \$42 million, with system costs accounting for \$12 million and terminal-related capital costs estimated at approximately \$30 million. The terminal costs include about \$16 million for ITS Equipment required at each of the terminals as well as \$14 million for transponder lanes, which assumes one lane per terminal for all terminals where the survey indicates there is a large base of repeat users. Terminals that would not have transponder lanes are those with a largely recreational ridership and/or very small numbers of riders, including: Anacortes, the San Juan Islands, Port Townsend, Keystone, Point Defiance and Tahlequah.” (pp.76)*

As a software purveyor, I suggest that the estimated capital costs for ITS equipment and custom reservation software are underestimated. I can find no data in the Plan to support such figures. Where some off-the-shelf solutions may handle significant reservation needs, they will not handle all programmatic needs necessary for a workable solution in all communities. The complexity and tailored nature of the software algorithms will add considerably to software costs. Moreover, the Plan does not appear to address the recurring operating costs attendant with such a system. Namely, help desk operators to make or resolve reservation issues, financial servicing for refunds/payment adjustments, and operational staff to deal with congestion and back-ups that will result when a scheduled run is delayed or canceled for any reason.

There may be appropriate uses for a reservation system on those routes where ferry travel truly is recreational in nature, or where bridges or other mainland highway routes exist as alternatives. There is insufficient data to conclude that such an approach is appropriate for all routes. Most importantly, reservations do nothing to create real additional vessel capacity. Reservations will add capital and operating costs without improving the marine highway infrastructure.

#### **Creative and Innovative Solutions Need to be Considered:**

The Draft LRP lacks suggestions for new approaches to getting travelers to their final destinations. It offers no funding options for consideration, focusing instead only on funding gaps for its Options A and B. I would encourage WSDOT to consider the following in future deliberations:

Avoid assuming that one-size-fits-all. Consider different approaches to meet the varied needs of each community served.

Stop using band-aids on the same old tire problems. Look anew at the issues:

- Consider configuring routes differently. For example, Vashon/Southworth traffic could go directly to Colman Dock (as it did temporarily in 2007), while commercial traffic and paid reservations could go to Fauntleroy on a much smaller vessel. Partner with Metro and others to have reliable, dedicated, short-haul shuttles from Fauntleroy to the

Admiral Junction, SeaTac airport, and Boeing so that more walk-ons could go to south Seattle with ease. Focus capital terminal improvements at Colman Dock for the benefit of Vashon, Bainbridge, and Bremerton, and let King County realize a savings by not having to operate a separate Passenger Only vessel and terminal.

- Resurrect the pre-I-695 plan that called for a more ambitious vessel capacity and identify how it could be funded.
- Look into leasing capital equipment, rather than assuming the State must purchase such investments. The International Lease Finance Corporation has facilitated capital investments for airlines for years, allowing companies like Boeing and partnering airlines to thrive. Talk to ILFC and other capital equipment investors. Identify private-public partnerships that build jobs in the private sector, limit state government's financial obligations, and still accomplish critical economic goals and objectives for citizens.
- Instead of accepting wildly fluctuating fuel costs as inevitable and asking travelers to absorb them in an ad hoc, unplanned manner, consider a fuel endowment for the state, much like the college GET plan. Have ferry-based residents make a deposit that gets invested into a protected fund, have the state match those funds, and let the interest from the principal be dedicated to covering upward fluctuations in fuel costs. Additionally, consider bulk rate fuel purchasing similar to that used by airlines.

There are numerous other ideas that warrant consideration, and may, indeed, have already been entertained, but the Draft LRP fails to communicate them.

At the end of the day, a long-range plan must articulate real needs and lay out the pathway for meeting them. This plan suggests that real growth is inevitable and that demand for greater vessel capacity is real. Recognizing that, posit a capital plan that meets that need and identify creative funding solutions to support it.

Robert Shull  
PO Box 1850  
Vashon, WA 98070  
January 19, 2009

Washington State Ferries  
Attn: Joy Goldenberg  
2901 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98121

RE: Comments to Washington State Ferries Department of  
Transportation, Ferries Division, Draft Long-Range Plan,  
December 2008

Dear Washington State Ferries:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Ferries Division Draft Long-Range Plan*. We respect that this draft plan is developed under many constraints. I have read the transcript from the Vashon public hearing which contains qualitative statements which express valid and important concerns. I hope and trust my comments and quantitative concerns are taken constructively. There are important and serious issues that must be addressed before this draft plan is finalized. Key issues include incorrect data and analyses pertaining to Vashon-Maury Island and incomplete analysis of changes in operation. I have tried to be helpful by citing specific pages and sections and matching the organization of the plan.

Pages ES-2, ES-3, and 14 reference I-695 which was declared unconstitutional and not implemented. All references to this unconstitutional initiative should be removed from the document because it was the Washington State Legislature that enacted these changes to the budget, not I-695. Continuing to use it as a reason or excuse is inaccurate and misleading, and sets the tone for questioning other statements in the draft plan.

Page 16 discusses Vehicle Holding Sizing and states "There needs to be enough holding space in the paid area for one sailing worth of vehicles plus standby vehicles." Then on page 17, paragraph 4, it is stated that [the budget] "...has forced WSF to take a completely fresh look at both what it is doing and how it is doing it." However, I find nowhere in the draft plan any data, costs, or analysis of any alternatives to the present method of selling tickets, taking tickets, holding vehicles, loading vehicles and passengers, and discharging them efficiently upon landing. Without these basic elements of operation being considered, many of the basic tenets of the draft plan are without basis and the plan is unfortunately fatally flawed. Currently many terminals see activity once per hour, resulting in great inefficiencies of staff and facilities. This plan does not consider methods used efficiently around the world for ferry and transit systems allowing for selling and taking tickets aboard the vessel. If the plan is to spend \$45 million (page 53) on a reservation system, then these basic elements of operation along with potential revisions to operations must be considered.

Page 21 mentions freight and states that a qualitative effort was conducted. This may be adequate for those communities served by a bridge, but, this is certainly not adequate for

Vashon-Maury Island where there are no alternatives to the ferry. The public testimony at the hearing on January 7, 2009 stated freight service must receive further attention and emphasis. Vashon-Maury is losing businesses (K2 Corporation and others) due to the declining service levels of WSF. What is not considered in the plan, but should be, is the need for Island residents to make longer trips, including commutes, when jobs and shopping disappear on the Island. These resulting land use changes and increasing imbalance between jobs and housing go against the Washington State planning goals and Governor Gregoire's mission to reduce VMT (vehicle miles of travel), energy consumption and greenhouse gases. More complete analysis of freight service must be included for locations such as Vashon-Maury without alternative service options.

There are serious flaws and inconsistencies between Table 7 on page 32, Exhibit 14 on page 44, and data in the 2006 O&D Survey. The O&D Survey states in reference to the Rhododendron on page 8-137 that "...the vehicle capacity is 48 vehicles per vessels [sic], and these have remained the same since 1993..." Table 7 states that the peak hour demand is 75 vehicles and the 4 hour demand is 216 vehicles. Yet, Exhibit 14 shows Estimated Percent Sailings Full by Route at 0-1% for the Point Defiance-Tahlequah run. If even one run is over capacity, and WSFA alert information and personal observation confirms this, then this should be a minimum of 6%. It appears that at least two of the three sources of information are incorrect. This data and these tables must be corrected before the recommendations based upon this erroneous analysis are considered.

To clarify this issue, the vehicle capacity of the Rhododendron is closer to 60 vehicles than 48. For such an important study, WSF should show that it knows the capacity of each of the vessels. The WSF website had published the capacity at 65 autos in 1997 before modifications to the vessel. The peak hour demand is probably close to 75, as experience shows that two or more sailings each direction are over capacity. Exhibit 14 should therefore show a minimum amount of 12% for 2006 conditions. While the Hiyu is being substituted for the Rhododendron during January (a typically lower demand month) of 2009, there are WSFA alerts (even with an imperfect information system) showing delays of 90 minutes or more. This results in the addition of traffic to the already congested I-5 corridor (adding VMT, energy consumption, and greenhouse gases) and additional delays and overloaded sailings at Fauntleroy. Without quantitative analysis of Plan B, comments on the number of overloaded vessels run cannot be made. Qualitative analysis shows that WSF already sees the need to add runs to partially compensate for the inadequate capacity of the Hiyu.

Table 7 contains at least one other inconsistency that needs to be checked. It shows the 4 hour peak 2030 Walk-ons reducing from 272 in 2006 to 166 in 2030. This is opposite to increases on every other route and conflicts with all other available data. This appears to be a data/analysis flaw and not a typographical error as the same table shows the arrivals at Vashon reduce from 286 to 190 during this same time period. The draft plan must not be adopted until these serious inconsistencies in data and flawed resulting analysis are corrected.

Section 8, starting on page 39, discusses proposed changes to the Vehicle LOS (Level of Service) measures. The draft plan verbiage shows that both the current and proposed LOS

measures need adjustments by route to make sense. Although the new LOS measures combined with the current measures offer some improvement, they are not adequate to address the LOS experienced by the ferry users. LOS must address issues of travel time (including travel time and wait time), total energy consumption (not just ferry fuel, but costs of ferry users taking alternative routes, and idling in line waiting to load or late at night to stay warm due to long schedule headways), and emissions (toxic and greenhouse gases). These issues are important for other planning processes in the State. It is not explained why they are not addressed here. Delay per passenger is commonly used in planning and it should be used in these analyses so the ferry operation can be compared equitably with other transportation systems in the State. The LOS analysis must be able to measure impacts such as 2.75 hour headway mid-day at Point Defiance as well as the 1.50+ hour wait with the Hiyu on this run. The LOS should take into account those who cannot be served at the Pt. Defiance terminal and must drive an additional 45 minutes plus the additional delay time at Fauntleroy due to shifting of demand. This analysis should include also the additional VMT and private vehicle operational costs to use the terminal at Fauntleroy. At a minimum, these typical planning measures must be addressed for a valid comparison between Plan A and Plan B. There are capital cost differences shown between Plan A and Plan B, but no quantifiable service analyses for use in proper decision making.

Section 10, starting on page 49, discusses Operations. WSF is to be commended for including operations within the planning process. The plan to improve transit connections is good and admirable and appears in many statewide, regional, and local plans. However, without serious implementation standards and quantifiable measures it is not useful. I am a regular ferry passenger/bus rider. At least 10% of the time, the connection between ferry and bus is missed, resulting in a minimum 30 minute additional delay to my trip. I don't think this additional delay would be tolerated for very long by citizens traveling on other state transportation system facilities. In fact, many of my fellow riders transfer to the automobile mode when this happens and then stay with the auto mode whenever possible. This modal shift reinforces the need for comprehensive planning of the ferry system as a part of the entire State transportation system and a system-wide LOS measure. As stated in the paragraph above, the plan must take into account the total trip, interaction with all systems, and the total impact upon costs and the environment. The current draft plan shunts the responsibility to provide service to others without addressing the costs or impacts. This is neither adequate nor acceptable.

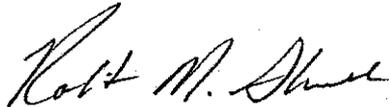
Vehicle Reservations, discussed in section 11 is novel, innovative, and has the promise of improvement for the user. However, before being adopted for an estimated cost of \$45 million, a more comprehensive analysis of costs and savings is required. How much does it really cost and save? If this is being discussed, it is imperative to examine the entire ticket selling, taking, loading, disembarking activity. This may result in staff reductions, holding capacity changes, and other operations and so may be unpopular, but it must be examined. Current practices result in inefficient labor distribution and system delays, leading to higher operations and capital costs. Operational improvements resulting from these improvements have the potential of providing a higher level of service for a lower cost. The estimated \$71 million allocated to improving dwell time (shown in Exhibit 24 on page 74) may not yield the benefits that could be achieved for lower cost through other operational changes. The last major improvement to the ticket booths

at Fauntleroy cost \$1 million and resulted in worse, rather than better, operation. Before reaching conclusions and spending money on a reservations system, the complete analysis must be performed.

When comparing between Plan A and Plan B, there is not a mention of the costs to retrofit the Hiyu to be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Also missing is any statement, analysis, or conclusion that additional operational costs are incurred to WSF because additional runs are required when using the Hiyu to partially compensate for the much lower vehicle capacity as compared to the Rhododendron.

It is an admirable goal that WSF intends to issue a completed plan within 10 calendar days of acceptance of final comments. I share a concern with many, who are dependent upon WSF, that this is insufficient time to adequately address the concerns raised in this letter and public testimony. The Washington State Ferry System has the power to seriously degrade or destroy the quality of life on Vashon-Maury Island. We need you to show us that you care enough to insure this plan and the underlying analysis is correct and complete so proper decisions can be made with a sound basis. I do hope my comments and suggestions are helpful in improving the draft plan and result in a better, more efficient, and cost effective Washington State Ferry System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Shull". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert M. Shull  
24505 Dockton Road SW  
PO Box 1850  
Vashon, WA 98070

WSDOT Ferries Division  
PUBLIC HEARING COMMENT FORM  
January 2009

routes such as  
val but add to  
rs for buses,  
gestion on  
se of the San  
tem of  
id for our  
: to increase  
ally, we are  
nefits other

**As I am a senior citizen, I believe that this typed copy of the following responses will be more legible for you to read than my shaky handwriting on a blue Public hearing Comment Form.**

*After reviewing the Draft long range plan, what questions or concerns do you have?*

(1) Why was such a small room selected for such an important meeting? And why was it so early in the evening when so many Vashon commuters are unable to return (due to ferry congestion and overloading) before 7:30 for a meeting. 400-500 people were turned away because they couldn't even get into the school building let alone into the meeting room. People were hungry and tired having had no time to stop to either get something to eat. Many of the commuters had had to leave their jobs early in order to arrive as soon as they did.

(2) There were many points made at the recent hearing by audience members. I can already see a long wait in ferry lines only becoming worse as a result of the Draconian two options that were presented.

*What questions or concerns do you have specific to your route?*

(1) As a senior citizen how can handicapped or frail people use the buses or board the ferries when they are forced to walk, especially on the Fauntleroy side, the length of the dock and, when they finally are able to board the ferry, access the upstairs. The single elevator is often blocked by cars or at the opposite end of the boat and there is no room to get through when either in a wheel chair or on crutches. Even a healthier person with heavy packages or coming from the airport with a suitcase, no matter how thin they are, does not have room to enter the elevator. I wish that every legislator or ferry official would be forced, at least once to walk the dock and climb the ferry chair on crutches. As a result, we senior citizens, with our often problem knees, bad backs, and other chronic health problems, are almost forced into driving a car just to be able to reach and board the boats. And not only does this add to the number of cars but create financial hardship when, with our limited incomes, we have to buy single car and driver tickets. Reservations would not help with this problem because seniors do not take the ferry (due to its cost) on a whim but because we have to travel to unexpected medical or other appointments. And, as was pointed out by a speaker at the meeting, due to doctor office delays and traffic, it is almost impossible to determine which ferry we would need to return on.

(2) When I was growing up on the island, where I still live at the north end, we could watch for the ferry to leave Southworth (actually Harper) and when it reached a certain point in the crossing go to our cars and drive directly onto a boat leaving for Seattle **AND WE WOULD NEVER MISS A FERRY!** I understand that the population has increased over the last 50-60 years but if you had be consistently working to keep up over that time we would not have had to live with the continued deterioration of service and ever lengthening wait times. Now when I have to go to Seattle or Tacoma I can wait in line for several hours either direction. As a commuter, an eight hour day is often 12-13 hours before one can return home and transportation costs and ferry fare can equal an hour's worth of daily pay. Proposals (a) & (b) do nothing to improve this situation.

(3) Two to three hour waits in line create another problem for children and adults with older more delicate or smaller bladders. When they have to go to the bathroom it is a serious problem. If we are going to have to continue to wait that long it would be helpful if two things were done. (A) Large signs placed along the line giving estimated wait time from that point. (B) Sanicans or other bathroom facilities placed along the line for use in order to prevent embarrassing and messy accidents.

*Other Comments*

When I visit my daughter and son in law back east we use toll roads with an easy pass to travel on the main roads between New York and Connecticut. Those roads are kept in beautiful condition compared to ours and there is little slowdown due to the use of easy passes. Traffic flow is much more efficiently

## *Plan "C"*

- 1) Retain all Ferry Service
- 2) Reduction of speed for savings of fuel.
- 3) Early tie-ups in evening and/or late starting times in the morning. This will vary by location.
- 4) Hull preservation, re-skinning of bottom of vessels when needed would save Billions! Boats should be able to run for 100 years if taken care of.
- 5) Larger generators for supers and Mark II's so they can run on two man engines would save on maintenance and pay for the job in 4 years on fuel savings alone!
- 6) Reduction of consultants in the office.
- 7) People depend on ferry's to get to their homes and moved here expecting the same amount of service.
- 8) Since 1980 the crews on the ferries are mandated by Coast Guard to be a certain size. The percent they have grown in size is 0 (zero). The percentage the office has grown is 1,000+ percent. Make cuts where they need to be made.
- 9) Get rid of terminal engineering.
- 10) Planning committees get 3.5 cents out of every gallon of gas tax. The ferries take ½ cent. Reduce planning to 2 cents to solve the problem.

Thank you, Secretary Hammond, for taking the time to come to Vashon to hear our concerns about the ferry system.

I am here to urge...no, to beg you to require the Washington State Ferry system to reconsider its current plan to remove the Rhododendron from its current service between the south end of Vashon and Pt. Defiance sometime over the next 5-10 years. Such a plan makes little sense--from either an environmental, an operational, or a financial standpoint. At the very minimum, the ferry system needs to make a much more persuasive case to the taxpayers for their plan to scrap the Rhody than it has done to date.

Just last week, Governor Gregoire signed into law legislation that requires the State of Washington to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by 2020. This means that we need to REDUCE the number of cars on the road, not increase them. Meeting this goal will mean building more capacity, more routes, and better connectivity into our PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM--NOT building bigger boats. The money that the taxpayers are being asked to spend on a bigger boat to replace the Rhody should, instead, be spent on providing more convenient and frequent bus service to the south end of Vashon, and to Pt. Defiance. Among other measures, this should involve adding a Metro bus route down the west side of Vashon, and an express bus route from Pt. Defiance to downtown Tacoma--as well as more frequent service with better connectivity to all ferry trips.

Experience has shown that the commuters off the south end of Vashon exhibit a tremendous amount of flexibility in their ability to use carpools, public transit or other means to leave their cars at home when they have to. Not surprisingly, when a smaller boat appears on this route, overloads do begin to occur--but they also dissipate over time, indicating that people DO figure out other ways of getting to and from the ferry when it becomes necessary. The increased demand for car space that the ferry system is using to justify its plan for a new boat is thus HIGHLY flexible.

Despite many letters and conversations with officials in the ferry system, we have heard little, if any inclination on their part to work with public transit to get people out of their cars. You, however, have the power to TELL the ferry system that they HAVE to work with Metro and Pierce Transit to get people out of their cars--rather than simply proposing to build bigger boats. The solution to this problem MUST involve SYSTEMIC approaches that focus on the entire transit system--rather than simply isolated decisions made by one component of the system.

Getting rid of the Rhody also makes little sense from an operational standpoint. Yes, of course the Rhody is an old boat. However, through many conversations over the past decade with the folks who work on the boat--including deck hands AND boat captains--I've learned that the Rhody is, in fact, built so well, and is so simple to repair, that with proper maintenance, it could run--and continue to be

repaired when necessary--indefinitely.

Unfortunately, though, over the past decade, the ferry system has apparently failed to provide the level of maintenance that the folks who actually run the boat have been saying is required in order to keep the Rhody in top running order--ostensibly because of I-695 funding cuts. This self-fulfilling prophesy of the impending demise of the Rhody is, of course, bad enough--but if the ferry system claims to not have enough money to keep the Rhody in top shape, how is it that they'll have the money to build a new boat?

Either way, we taxpayers will have to pay the bill. So, why is it that the ferry system is not **REQUIRED** to **PROVE** to the taxpayers of this state that paying for what the **BOAT CREWS** would consider to be an adequate maintenance schedule--i.e., the schedule that was in place before I-695 hit--would cost **MORE** than replacing the boat altogether? This business of treating boats as disposable goods--rather than valuable assets that can last indefinitely if properly cared for--has got to stop.

So, I'm here to beg you to require the ferry system to **PROVE** to you and the taxpayers of this state that replacing the Rhody with a new boat would, in fact, represent a **LESS** expensive alternative than the cost of increasing the scope, frequency and connectivity of the buses that now serve Tahlequah and Pt. Defiance. If the ferry system cannot demonstrate this, then their plan to get rid of the Rhody must be **STOPPED**, and the money that would have gone to building a new boat should be **RE-DIRECTED** toward improving public transit to persuade people to get out of their cars.

If we're as serious about reducing our greenhouse gas emissions in this state as the legislation passed last week seems to imply, replacing the Rhody with a bigger boat is clearly a step in the **WRONG** direction. According to the people who work with this wonderful boat on a daily basis--and thus know her best--if properly maintained, the Rhody can continue to service the south end of Vashon **INDEFINITELY**. I urge you to do whatever you can to allow her to do so.

Thank you for your time.

LAC Properties LLC  
 4409 N. 26<sup>th</sup> St.  
 Tacoma, WA 98407  
 (253) 370-3637

January 7, 2009

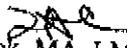
RE: Proposed changes to Pt. Defiance/Tahlequah ferry schedule

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the owner of two small businesses in Tacoma and reside on Vashon Island. I regularly commute on the Pt. Defiance/Tahlequah run. I have grave concerns about the proposed plan to replace the Rhododendron with the Hiyu and believe that these changes are based on misinformation.

- On paper there is only a small difference in the number of cars that the Rhododendron can carry versus the Hiyu. In actuality, based on numbers provided by the deck crew on both ferries, the difference is 18 cars per trip. Based on a weekday schedule there is a difference of 612 car slots per weekday and 4356 car slots per week. This is a huge difference.
- There are claims that the Hiyu is much less expensive to run. However, a graveyard crew is needed for this ferry. Since there is no place to house these employees over night, lodging is provided in Lakewood, WA. Apparently, this lodging comes out of a different budget and therefore is not being factored in to the cost differential. Lodging for 2-4 people per night can easily cost \$1400 per week. We need to look at overall costs.
- Recently, millions of taxpayer dollars were spent to outfit the Rhododendron for a post 9/11 world. The Hiyu has not been upgraded to address current dangers. How can a safety concern worth millions disappear in a budget crisis.
- During recent times when the Hiyu has temporarily replaced the Rhododendron, people make significant accommodations to their commute. Even with these accommodations waits of 2 hours for regular commuters was not uncommon. I personally experienced the 7:20pm ferry back to Vashon over-loading every night.
- This very morning, even the 9:45am ferry to Pt. Defiance overloaded. These Vashon side overloads do not get counted because it is an unmanned dock.
- When I moved to the island 15 years ago, there was continuous service from roughly 5am to nearly mid-night between Pt. Defiance and Tahlequah. During the "car tab" budget crisis we lost midday and late night service. During these 15 years, costs have gone from approximately \$6 per round trip (car and driver) to \$12 for a frequent user. It is likely that any service decreases will never be recovered.
- Many Tacoma based businesses use this run to get goods and services to Vashon every day. No one has looked at this negative impact to both communities.

As I work in the evening, I am unable to attend the meetings. Please consider intelligent adjustments based on actual real life data. If I can be of further assistance, feel free to contact me.

Thank you,  
  
 Leslie A Chertok, MA LMHC

January 4, 2009

To: WSF Long Range Planning Committee  
From: Beth de Groen  
RE: Comments on the Long Range Plan

Dear Committee:

Thanks for the effort you have expended, trying to reconcile the difference between the needs of the ferry system and the means to meet those needs in this difficult time.

I have lived on Vashon since 1976, and I have seen many changes in the system, which was prospering until Tim Eyman's initiative (which most islanders did not support, I am happy to say). The cutbacks in service have directly exacerbated declines in the numbers of lower-middle class and poor people who can live here, in the number of people who have to commute (and have to be sitting at a desk at 8 or 9 a.m., five days a week), and the number of students in our schools, since many **working families** have left.

It has become nearly impossible for regularly employed people who work off the island to get to work, unless they endure a twelve-hour day. Further cuts will necessitate a longer commute day, and I believe that many more people will leave the island because they can no longer get to work, even though work is just twenty minutes away! The island will change into a place where people do not work because the lack of support by the government has made it impossible for them to live here and work. Of course, they will always be able to move elsewhere, but the town and school will die, and the island will be a summer/ tourist destination, rather than a vital community with a lot to offer this region. There are many people who would not mind this change because they do not have to work, and the fewer people there are on the island, the better! I do not share this attitude.

If a ferry is cut from the north end, is part of the long range plan to divert the Southworth riders to another ferry so that all the ferry space will be given to Vashon riders? Have you considered a property tax for people who live on all islands to insure that the islands which are not connected will have ferry service, (e.g. a sum \$30 per hundred thousand of value annually?). The level of service would have to be such that people could get to jobs on the other side, but I believe people would be happy to pay this, whether they commuted or not because ninety-five percent of the people here love the idea of a community center and small town life.

Even though we have many retired, rich (not working), or self-employed residents, most of the inhabitants of the island and their children are dependent on the level of service we have now as a minimum level of service. Further cutbacks result in people being forced to leave and all the negativity this exodus entails. Many of those leaving will not necessarily remain in King County, which is too expensive for many and too crowded for the rest.

I do not think this is a change that many people on or off the island want to see.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth de Groen".

Beth de Groen

9810 SW 148<sup>th</sup> St.,  
Vashon, WA 98070



**Saliva Testing And Reference laboratory, Inc.**

562 First Avenue South, Suite 703, Seattle, WA 98104 ★ [www.salivalab.com](http://www.salivalab.com)  
Tel (206) 217-0911 ★ FAX (206)264-0859 ★ email [LinFisHof@aol.com](mailto:LinFisHof@aol.com)

January 7, 2009

Director of WSF

Dear Sir:

Why is your name not listed on the WSF website? I would much prefer to address you by name.

I will be at the meeting tonight on Vashon but doubt I will have the opportunity to talk. I have spoken many times in the past and little has been accomplished. I have a feeling you are going to try to get us to go to the legislature again for money. This is not the answer to the cuts in service on Vashon. You need to find the money at WSF to keep our ferries running. You already know the Hiyu is not adequate for the Talequah run and that 2 ferries don't work on the north end. You want us to get so excited that we will go to Olympia and ask for more money and maybe get it. And then you will buy new desks and have parties at Coleman dock and all sorts of other things not necessary for WSF's mission to carry people and their belongings across water.

Find the money by efficiencies. Have fewer administrators. Close down your administration building and move back to Coleman Dock. Have serious discussions with the unions and see what you can give that doesn't cost money. Olympia has better things to do with their money than fund an inefficient ferry system.

Sincerely,

Lindsay F. Hofman, PhD, DABCC, FACB

MATT

1-7-09

MY NAME IS RON WESTPHAL (RETIRED)

FOR THE PAST 26 MONTHS I HAVE BEEN TAKING THE FERRY AT LEAST 15 TO 20 DAYS A MONTH TO RECEIVE CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENTS AT SEATTLE CANCER CARE ALLIANCE.

PRIORITY LOADING IS GREAT AND I THANK THE FERRY SYSTEM FOR MYSELF AND ALL OTHER LEUKEMIA / CANCER / TRANSPLANT AND OTHERS WHO MUST LEAVE THE ISLAND FOR FREQUENT MEDICAL TREATMENTS WHICH ARE NOT AVAILABLE ON VASHON / MAURY ISLAND. DON AND ALL OF THE FERRY EMPLOYEES ARE VERY KIND AND HELPFUL GETTING US (PRIORITY MEDICAL) PATIENTS ON THE FERRIES.

NOW HOW CAN YOU CUT BACK THE SIZE AND NUMBER OF FERRIES SERVING VASHON / MAURY ISLAND WHEN WE STILL HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF RIDERS NEEDING TO GET TO WORK - SCHOOL - SCHOOL ACTIVITIES - MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS, ETC. (?!?) AND RETURN HOME ?!?

I HOPE YOU NEVER HAVE TO HAVE CHEMOTHERAPY - BUT IMAGINE IF YOU WILL WAITING IN A LONG FERRY LINE FOR A FERRY WHICH HAS BEEN CANCELLED (BY LEGISLATURE). YOU ARE SICK, SICK, SICK - OR YOUR CHILD, PARENT, MATE OR FRIEND. YOUR DOCTOR OR CLINIC

CANNOT SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT CHANGE  
DUE TO LEGISLATURE'S CANCELLATION OF A  
FERRY OR FERRY RUN!

EXAMPLE

WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE I WORKED  
5 SUMMERS FOR SANTA FE RAILROAD AS A  
SWITCHMAN-BRANEMAN IN A CREW OF 5 MEN.  
TODAY THEY HAVE 2 MAN CREWS AND MOVE  
3 TIMES AS MANY RAILCARS AS THEY DID WITH 5 MEN.

SOLUTION

THE LAST THING I WANT TO SEE IS  
ANYONE LOSE THEIR JOB, BUT I THINK THE  
FERRY SYSTEM NEEDS TO LOOK AT REDUCING  
PERSONNEL, BOTH ON THE FERRY AND ON  
THE DOCK THROUGH ATTRITION. THE  
RAILROADS DID THIS SUCCESSFULLY.

GOVERNOR GREGOIRE — WHERE ARE  
YOU? HOW CAN YOU TREAT VASHON/MAURY  
ISLAND AS IF WE ARE SECOND OR THIRD  
CLASS CITIZENS? WE PAY A PHENOMINAL  
AMOUNT OF TAXES (WHICH KEEPS INCREASING  
EXPONENTIALLY) TO KING COUNTY AND THE  
STATE OF WASHINGTON. WE DESERVE  
TO BE TREATED FAIRLY AS FIRST CLASS  
CITIZENS OF KING COUNTY, STATE OF  
WASHINGTON!!

RON WESTPHAL  
15325 119<sup>th</sup> AVE. S.W.  
VASHON, WA. 98070  
206-567-5623

Since 1995 when I moved to Vashon ferry service has been curtailed each year while staff has become more and more bloated. You have built a new 6-story building downtown and your parking budget is almost \$1M/yr. This information is very difficult to find, since your budget is intentionally opaque and fails to mention one word about non-operational staff or your non-operational capital program.

WSF should have as its SINGLE mission to provide this vital transportation link that can never be provided any other way. It is not there as a jobs program for friends of Sharon Nelson or any other money-wasting bureaucrat. The system has been incompetently run and funds have been squandered, which is why we find ourselves in this situation.

I want to know what the intended non-operational headcount reduction is for 2009 under both plans and how much money could be saved by selling your downtown offices and moving into much smaller rented quarters in some non-downtown location, such as Lakewood or Port Orchard. Sell the building – keep the boats!

I also want to know, since you personally don't operate the boats, why we need you.

Why are you still on the payroll?

**WSDOT Ferries Division**  
**PUBLIC HEARING COMMENT FORM**  
**January 2009**  
**SOUTHWORTH / FAUNTLEROY**

**NEW FOCUS:** The focus of vehicle ferries must shift from moving cars to moving people.

**GOAL:** Fill the passenger sections of vehicle ferries. This will result in the lowest cost per person.

**DESTINATION:** If WSDOT take people where they want to go, they will fill the passenger sections. No additional resources should be dedicated to a route until passenger sections operate at maximum capacity.

**SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLES (SOV):** An informal study at Fauntleroy revealed 70% of the vehicles were SOV. We should not cater to the SOV. This is not prudent given today's limited resources.

**ORIGIN-DESTINATION STUDY:** WSDOT Origin-Destination study revealed 78% of Southworth commuters stated Coleman was closer to their destination than Fauntleroy.

**BREMERTON-COLEMAN:** Limited capacity due to Rich Passage and length of route.

**BREMERTON / SOUTHWORTH:** These Kitsap terminals should be viewed jointly. Over the long-term, runs should shift from Bremerton-Coleman to Southworth-Coleman.

**LESS RESOURCES REQUIRED:** Since runs from Southworth-Coleman are 1/3 shorter than runs from Bremerton-Coleman, this will not require more ferries and will increase capacity through additional runs.

**COLEMAN CAPACITY:** Coleman does not need a fourth slip to accommodate Southworth. With proper logistical timing and reconfiguration of existing holding areas, Coleman can accommodate some Southworth runs.

**DO IT NOW:** Start with just one Southworth-Coleman commuter run now. The passenger section will fill up. Commuter vans will be given priority. Over time, additional runs from Bremerton can shift to Southworth according to need.

**MEETS WSDOT GOALS:**

1. **Maximize use of vessels.** If the passenger sections of vehicle ferries operate at capacity, the ferries will have maximum passengers.
2. **Adaptive Management Strategy:** Adapting routes, runs and origin-destinations will strategically increase capacity without unnecessary additional costly resources.
3. **Highest Quality Service:** Maximizing passenger sections of vehicle ferries means a lower cost per person than focusing on the high cost per vehicle.

**LOWEST COST PER PERSON:** This focus is consistent with sustainability, Mayor Nichol's letter to the WSDOT dated 1.21.09, the City Council's resolution to not expand the Fauntleroy terminal, the Growth Management Act, Vashon goals, Southworth goals, Seattle goals and WSDOT goals.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE  
WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FERRIES DIVISION DRAFT LONG RANGE PLAN  
of DECEMBER 2008

SUBMITTED BY  
WHIDBEY SEATAC SHUTTLE  
OAK HARBOR, WASHINGTON

The draft plan contemplates an obviously complex issue that may be reduced to its simplest form by the question, how to provide efficient, reliable, quality and customer friendly service within the framework of a defective fiscal environment? The first part of the question is relatively easy to answer; it is the second that poses the challenge.

From the standpoint of the customer, and WSDOT and WSF must characterize the users of the ferry system as customers, the B.C. Ferry system serves as a good model. Their boats are clean, they run on time, access is safe and efficient for both foot passengers and vehicles, there are enough resources to provide for reasonable service levels and holding areas are generally sufficient.

On the other hand, WSF has over the course of time been neglected by both the legislature and WSDOT and most recently in the past ten years, WSF management. There has been an ingrained pattern of "buck passing" when it came to responsibility for the continued upkeep and revitalization of the system. Those in the State House and Senate responsible for the capitol funding of the system did not act and blamed it on WSF for not telling them of the problems and needs. WSF claimed that the legislature was unresponsive to their needs and did not effectively make their case known. The Transportation Commission blithely rubberstamped tariff increases as requested by WSF without regard to capitol needs under the theory of fare box recovery. Once again looking to the legislature for relief, but not providing the advocacy that the public expected of them. WSDOT repaired roads, fretted over bridges and generally neglected the ferry system as a step child that it did not want to recognize as part of the state highway system.

Lastly I-695 was passed as the will of the people to tell Olympia pay to attention, continued unrestrained spending must stop. It has become the single most used excuse for failure of our transportation infrastructure. The people spoke ten years ago on this issue and no one in the legislature or the agencies was listening. The response has been to come up with more ways to draw funds from the public, not to come up with a more efficient way to run government. Increase tariffs and tolls not streamline the way business is done.

The Plan as submitted does not adequately address the current needs of the system let alone the future demands that will be placed upon it. It does, however, reflect the one dimensional thinking that has placed the state in its current situation. Creative and new thinking are the order of the day, not just more of the same. Unfortunately we are now faced with crisis management rather than prudent and well thought out planning. I do not presume to have the answers at this late juncture. As stated it is a complex issue with many facets and an equal number of ramifications. I will address a limited number of issues which from my perspective deserve examination.

**FARE BOX RECOVERY:** Through almost unrestrained increases in fares over the course of the past ten years, WSF now enjoys what I believe is the highest fare box recovery of any transit system in the country. Through the current policy performing routes are subsidizing low revenue routes. While in principle this is the nature of shared responsibility over the system by all, it results in inequities in application. Costs should be determined on a per mile transported or weighted vehicle/passenger per mile with necessity of frequency factored in. It is not reasonable or responsible to continue a policy that is dictated by fare box recover for all operational expenses. Those expenses are a moving target and every time the goal is approached the goal posts are moved. Fare box recovery should be set at some realistic percentage or as fixed number. They cannot and will not "run" the system.

**MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM:** This tem though benign in intent has had terrible implications for the ferry system. The ferry system is part of the state highway system, it is not a separate and distinct entity. WSF exists, or should, to provide for the unique aspects of that portion of the highway system. Highway 525 beginning in Mukilteo and terminating on Whidbey Island is no less a highway when it crosses water than Highway 520 is when it crosses Lake Washington. WSDOT would have it treated otherwise and relegate it to secondary status subservient to the needs of its dirt and concrete bound roads. This thinking is not only unproductive but detrimental to the welfare of the transportation infrastructure of the state.

**WALK ON PASSENGERS:** A great deal has been made of increasing walk on passengers and reducing the number of vehicles. While this is a noble and good sentiment it must be remember that no good deed goes unpunished. As you reduce vehicles you reduce revenues at a greater rate than you would increase the through passenger fares. This coupled with the proposal to increase vehicle fares at a faster rate than passengers not only places an unfair burden to those customers that must use vehicles as their mode of transportation but presumes a willingness of other transit agencies to in effect subsidize the highway system. This then throws the financial burden back to the local jurisdictions to fund state highways through public funding of transits.

With revenues declining and service levels dropping, the conclusion is inevitable. Additionally, walk on passengers are an impediment to the efficient operation of the system. Do not misinterpret my sentiments here, the more walk on passengers the better provided that the system is designed to accommodate them. The Draft refers to the core function of WSF of transporting vehicles. As provided for on most ferry runs, foot passengers hinder the traffic flow and slow the turn around process. This results in longer schedule times and necessitates faster transit times. Efficient loading via overhead ramps or sequences loading with vehicles first on and first off would make the process far more efficient. Walk on obey the same rules as vehicle, at sailing time the vessel departs, no stragglers. This would, if the current schedules were maintained, allow for a slower transit time with the resultant savings in fuel.

**USE OF RESOURCES:** It is proposed that the wait for service be redefined and ferry resources be reassigned on a more average flow based over a longer period of time. Let's be clear here, this is another way of saying **REDUCTION IN SERVICE LEVEL**. You cannot make a square peg fit in to a round hole no matter how wishful your thinking. The Draft refers to a low percentage of discretionary users as justification for this proposal. This is not what planners are looking to on the highway 520 bridge, it is only suggested here as an example of the step child marine highway mentality. The public rely on an accessible, reliable transportation network. Not a three boat wait in the middle of the week. I heartily endorse an examination of resources and their best allocation, but allocation is not at the convenience of the system but to the accommodation of the customer's reasonable expectations.

**LABOR COSTS:** Some one has to say it, the union's strangle hold on the state must stop. As a classic example I offer the debacle of food service on the system a few years ago. The customers were held hostage while the union wrought havoc on the service. I have seen at tariff hearings the deference paid by both WSF and the Transportation Commission the union representatives and their organization's agendas. The cost to the system is too great, either realistic negotiations must take place or perhaps the unions have out liver their purpose.

**REGIONAL/STATE WIDE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM:** This is without a doubt the most important facet of our transportation system that is overlooked. What affects Pt. Townsend affects Spokane. We are one state, we support rural roads in Eastern Washington and they must support our ferries. This is the philosophy that built the nation's transportation system. The system must be examined and built as a whole, not in fractionalized disjointed pieces. Multi-billion dollar pet rail project that serve the few at an exorbitant cost cannot be but with state transportation funds that are needed to maintain the commerce and populations of the state. And so it goes for the other multi-billion dollars limited use projects.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP:** The most over verbalized and under utilized concept in state government. Much is said, little is done. The draft proposes that public transit connect with ferries on either end of their runs, not accounting for the general inconvenience to the customer of the mode changes and exposure to the inclement weather. The financial burden is glibly shifted to the localities for this expanded transit service in an effort to increase capacity on WSF vessel. Private industry does now transport large quantities of passengers on WSF ferries, thereby freeing up deck space for other vehicle while still providing a good percentage of the revenue that would otherwise be had. The direct benefit to the customers is that no mode change is involved and no exposure to the weather. All are happy and the goals of WSF are met, jobs are created and the tax payer is not burdened. Is this concept promoted or even proposed in the DRAFT? In a word, NO. It is time to stop ignoring the job creating, taxpaying, vehicle reducing transpiration providers and include them as a suggested an integral part of the network.

**IN STATE CONSTRUCTION:** This a very flawed argument on the part of the legislature and I suspect the unions. Currently ferries are required to be built in Washington. Once again, a good idea with bad resultant effects. First we are no doubt paying far more in essentially a no bid process in order to keep the jobs in state. Well keeping the jobs in state is certainly a good this, but at what cost. We pay millions more, we can not afford the necessary number of vessels, runs are cut back and traffic flows decrease. Now communities suffer, businesses fail and people are out of work. Now just how many ship yard jobs did you create to offset the general economic damage done by not have enough ferries? This is not hypothecation, look at the direct and demonstrative effect on the Pt. Keystone run now. Examine the effects of a reduction in service to the San Juan Island and or the cessation of service to Sidney, B.C and its relation to Anacortes. Only one side of the equation has been examined, not the whole.

I will end here. Unfortunately I cannot support either Plan A or Plan B. They do not effectively address the needs of the system or customers and do not address funding issues. The legislature and WSDOT must sit down together and rethink the way the do business and spend our money.

# **Washington State Ferries Draft Long-Range Plan**

## **Public Hearing Comment**

### **Introduction**

My name is Robin Adams. I live at 752 Furman Avenue in Langley, Washington, and work as a management consultant for CRU Strategies Ltd. I have some professional familiarity with the shipping industry. I have read the long-range plan and attended one of the public meetings. I wish to supplement my oral comments with this written submission.

### **General Comment**

This plan is a great improvement on the previous plan which envisaged the construction of a large number of standard vessels which did not recognize the different needs of different communities. That plan also reflected a business as usual philosophy which was neither cost effective nor environmentally responsible.

Having said this, the current plan is still seriously inadequate and, I submit, not fully responsive to the legislative guidance set out in ESHB 2358 and summarized on page ES-1 of the Plan.

I wish to comment on WSF's response to three of the requests of the legislature, address issues specific to Whidbey Island and, finally, comment on the financial dilemma facing WSF.

### **Improved Forecasting Procedures**

The legislature instructed WSF to improve its forecasting procedures. However the current forecast still lacks credibility and appears to be unrelated to either of the two options presented by WSF.

WSF's ridership forecasts are set out on page 30. They envisage the number of vehicle trips rising from 10.8 million in 2006 to 14.1 million in 2030. As a professional economist and management consultant, I find it disappointing that the base for the forecast is 2006 when we already have actual ridership data for 2007 and most of 2008. More seriously, the ridership of WSF ferries peaked in the late 1990s and has been trending down for almost a decade despite (until recently) strong national and regional economic growth.

WSF discussed their customer base in the report. They observe that:

- (a) there are fewer commuters as a proportion of total business, and
- (b) riders have more flexibility than expected.

This confirms what many economists have known for some time, namely that work patterns are changing in response particularly to changes in information technology. The traditional pattern of 9-5 work at a central location is giving way to more flexible hours and network-type employment patterns which, effectively, break the link between economic and population growth on the one hand, and the demand for ferry trips on the other.

It appears that WSF is predicting a reversal of these trends but gives no reasons for this forecast. The reality is that there has been little or no growth in the demand for ferry service on the existing routes for some years now. I suspect that WSF accepts that this is the case since even its Plan A provides for no additional service in contrast to the previous long-term plan which called for a noticeable expansion of service on the basis of similar growth forecasts.

I submit that WSF's ridership growth forecasts remain far too aggressive.

### **Strategies to Lower Costs**

The legislature asked WSF to develop strategies to lower costs. Apart from suggesting that reducing sailing speeds may save some fuel, the report fails to address the main elements of WSF's cost structure in meaningful ways.

Since fuel prices are ultimately set by global energy market conditions over which WSF has no influence and since manning levels reflect Coast Guard regulations, the main ways in which costs can be controlled is in relation to capital programs related to vessels and terminals.

With regard to vessels, WSF's costs, as evidenced by the recent bids for the Island Home vessel, are out of control. Drewry Shipping Consultants, an internationally recognized source of economic data on the shipping industry, reported the following newbuilding prices effective as of January 2009:

- (a) \$135 mn for an 8000 TEU containership<sup>1</sup>,
- (b) \$81 mn for a 170,000 DWT dry bulk carrier, and
- (c) \$69 mn for a 37,000 DWT chemical tanker.

These ships are larger than our ferries by factors of between 10 and 50! Yet the Island Home ferry is costing over \$80 mn and the difference between Plan A and Plan B, which is 5 vessels, is \$1.4 billion. The problem that WSF faces is partly a function of the Jones Act, which requires vessels in domestic service to be built in the US. However, WSF further compounds this problem by restricting bids to local shipyards. The Island Home bid elicited only one response. This lack of competitiveness is the fundamental reason why these vessels are costing the taxpayer prohibitive amounts.

---

<sup>1</sup> TEU means 20ft equivalent unit. 8000 TEU's require about 20 railroad trains or 4000 trucks to move this shipload of containers to their final destination.

WSF needs to clearly articulate this issue and request a change in the law to allow any US shipyard to compete for its business.<sup>2</sup> Nichols shipyard on Whidbey Island has been building vessels for California. Their business would be ruined if other states took the parochial attitude of Washington. As an employment generating mechanism, this policy is futile. It is driving WSF to Plan B under which no new vessels will be ordered before 2021, apart from the single Island Home vessel required for the Port Townsend route.

As to terminals, WSF still proposes to relocate the Mukilteo terminal. This made sense when WSF planned to put three boats on that route and, therefore, required two slips and an enlarged parking area. However, WSF no longer plans three-boat service for this route (and none is necessary) and is going to move to a reservations system at peak time, obviating the need for more parking. While the terminal needs to be properly maintained, there is no longer a need to relocate it.

Another example of WSF's lack of cost consciousness is a proposed \$9 mn walkway for the Clinton park and ride! There is a perfectly good sidewalk from the park and ride to the ferry and there is a bus stop there (with free bus service) for passengers who are unable or unwilling to walk.

I submit that WSF has not thought through the capital implications of its plans and has still not developed the level of cost consciousness with respect to capital that the legislature has requested.

### **Improved Asset Utilization**

The legislature has asked WSF to consider pricing and operational strategies to improve asset utilization and reduce costs. WSF's response has been to propose a reservation system, to recommend that passenger fares increase at half the rate of vehicle fares, and to propose a three season pricing structure instead of the current two season arrangement.

These proposals, while a move in the right direction, are an inadequate response. A reservation system has merit in that it eliminates the need to provide large parking lots in which vehicles must wait. For that reason, I support it. However, a reservations system is still a form of queuing and as such reflects elements of economic inefficiency. As regards the passenger fare proposal, if fares are rising at 2.5% a year, halving the rate of growth of passenger fares will provide passengers with a 1.25% break (equivalent to about 10 cents a year on the Mukilteo-Clinton route). It will take decades to create a meaningful incentive under such a policy. Finally, seasonal peaking is only one problem. We also have time of day and day of week peaking, which WSF does not address in its plan.

WSF needs to consider the following measures that will provide more meaningful incentives for the utilization of its capacity:

---

<sup>2</sup> Ideally WSF should also call on the Washington congressional delegation to request an exemption from the Jones Act. Potentially this could allow WSF to acquire new or second-hand boats from foreign locations at a fraction of the costs we are now facing.

- (a) setting passengers fares at the same per mile level as public transit norms or, preferably, eliminating them altogether on routes with low walk-on demand; the revenue lost would be offset by higher vehicle fares, encouraging ride-sharing
- (b) varying the vehicle charge according to length starting from 12 ft rather than 20ft; this would encourage riders to use smaller vehicles where possible, allowing more to be loaded on each run, and
- (c) raising fares on peak sailings and lowering them on off-peak sailings on both a daily, weekly and seasonal basis; this would encourage discretionary riders to select off-peak times.

Some of these changes would require a different philosophy with respect to frequent user discounts. Instead of the electronic card reflecting a set number of trips, it could contain a set number of dollars. The user would consume these faster or slower depending on whether or not they rode in large or small cars or rode on peak or off-peak sailings. A frequent user would then be defined as someone who guaranteed that WSF would receive a certain amount of revenue in a given period, rather than someone who committed to a specific number of trips in a given period. This change would also allow WSF potentially to create several classes of frequent user – daily commuters, frequent users (typically residents of the ferry dependent communities) and occasional users – and offer different rates of discount.

I submit that the proposals of WSF with regard to asset utilization are far too tentative and incremental. They need to be bolder and more imaginative in this respect.

### **Whidbey Island Issues**

This plan discriminates against Whidbey Island in various ways.

First, the level of service standards proposed for the Keystone-Port Townsend (and San Juan) route are lower than for other routes in the sense that riders have to experience worse service on these routes than on other routes before actions are taken by WSF, whether these be actions to spread demand or actions to increase capacity. With regard to the point at which increased investment is triggered, the Mukilteo-Clinton (and Bainbridge and Kingston) route customers have to endure worse service than the Vashon and Bremerton customers before corrective action is taken. I submit that all customers should be treated equally without implied judgments that recreational users are less important than other users or that discretionary users are less important than non-discretionary users.

Most private sector profit-maximizing businesses take the opposite approach. They usually make an extra effort to attract the discretionary customer. Moreover, recreational users are a significant part of the economy of the ferry dependent communities. Put simply, we need their business and we are competing with other recreational alternatives elsewhere in the state and the country. If we make their experience in getting here miserable, we will shoot ourselves in the foot.

However, I recognize that WSF is not a private business but a public service. Thus, I do not advocate discrimination in favor of these routes. I merely ask for equal treatment of all customers.

Second, Whidbey Island currently receives the lowest quality of service in the system based on 2006 data. The Clinton-Mukilteo route has the highest percentage of full sailings during the summer peak and the Keystone-Port Townsend route has the second highest. The situation is now much worse than portrayed by these figures since the Keystone-Port Townsend route has been reduced to one sailing.

Moreover, Plan B intensifies this discrimination. It proposes the construction of only one Island Home vessel. Since this is the only vessel in the system compatible with Keystone harbor, this means that every year there will be a service gap for annual maintenance and Coast guard inspection.

It is essential that, even in Plan B, we have two Island Home vessels. This is required to ensure year round continuous service on the Port Townsend-Keystone route. More generally, this vessel will provide a reserve for other contingencies, which is not present in the 17 boat plan. It is fundamentally unsound for WSF to present a plan that has no reserve capacity, particularly given the high average age of its fleet.

We can pay for this extra vessel by eliminating an unnecessary terminal move in Mukilteo and the walkway in Clinton.

### **Financing the System**

WSF's plan does not reflect the legal principle that these ferries are part of the state highway system and, as such, akin to any other bridge, tunnel or mountain pass. The difference is that when using the system (unlike when driving across a bridge or pass), somebody else is doing the driving, paying for the fuel and bearing the wear and tear costs.

Once this is understood, the basis for fare revenues must surely be the vessels' truly variable operating and maintenance costs. The rest of the cost structure – the fixed operating and maintenance costs and the capital costs of the vessels and the terminals – are conceptually no different from bridges, tunnels, passes and so forth on the rest of the highway system.

The construction of a new vessel to replace an old vessel that has reached the end of its physical life (or renovating a terminal that has deteriorated after 25 years in the salt water) is conceptually no different from replacing the snowplows that the Department of Transportation in use on the passes in winter. It needs to come out of the general highway operations and maintenance budget. WSF continues to complain about not having a

“dedicated source” of funds for capital projects. It should stop making this type of complaint. The Alaskan Way viaduct, the 520 bridge and Snoqualmie Pass do not have dedicated funds. They are all part of a highway system which needs to be maintained and should be working from a common pool of funds. Maintenance priorities should be set on a technical and engineering basis. Right now one of the two lanes of the “bridge” between Keystone and Port Townsend has fallen down. What other part of the highway system has seen this type of collapse without urgent repairs being undertaken?

The construction of a vessel to provide increased service is, of course, quite different. It is akin to adding another lane to the bridge. That needs to be considered in the light of an overall study of the costs and benefits involved – and again this should be done in a manner that is consistent across the entire highway network.

Based on this I strongly support WSF’s efforts to use the existing capacity more effectively before considering spending large sums of taxpayer dollars enlarging these highways. However, I strongly object to setting a different standard for WSF’s highways when it comes to the ongoing maintenance required to keep them in their present condition. After all, the Department of Transport is not considering shrinking the size of any other highway in the state. I submit that WSF does a disservice by failing to frame a plan that reflects its legal status as part of the highway system and by constantly reverting to complaints about one of Tim Eyman’s initiatives, which has anyway been over-ruled by the courts.

Thank you for your consideration of the points I have raised.

Robin G Adams  
Langley, WA  
10 January 2009

Washington State Ferry System

January 5, 2009

Members of Ferry Transportation Planning Committee,

Having lived on Whidbey Island for 41 years and ridden numerous times the Clinton/Mukilteo ferry crossing for work and otherwise, the idea of making reservations for each crossing is revolting. I realize you are looking for innovation, but this is NOT the way to go. For the working commuter to have to reserve for each trip is equally revolting--no matter how you structure it or try to make it palatable. And some variation of the single card ticket for reservation--as the single ferry/auto/passenger ticket in use currently, is further forcing people into the Ferry Systems idea of efficiency. (Do we scan, do we hand, number of tickets remaining gone in a blink and no indication whatsoever on the card. Same number of ticket takers, and lovely little machines taped over.)

As a casual user now, I clearly do not wish to be tied to a reservation system to cross. And what about returning to the island,--- determine when you want to catch the ferry after a day of business or shopping? predetermine time in the morning when you want to return in order to pre reserve? miss a reservation?

I think that shopping in Oak Harbor (which I have never done) and perhaps going off the north end could be a pleasant experience. I believe you will see a reduction of ridership if people can still make a choice. Even though we have already paid for the passenger ticket on arrival. At some point people will just say "to heck with it", I am driving around. Gas prices are down.

Sincerely,

Jean Wilcox  
2437 Sunlight Beach Rd  
Clinton, Washington



**DOW CONSTANTINE**  
**Metropolitan King County Council**  
**District Eight**

King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104-3272  
dow.constantine@metrokc.gov

January 26, 2009

David Moseley  
Assistant Secretary, WSDOT  
Washington State Ferries  
2901 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98121

Dear Mr. Moseley:

I am writing today to share my opinion on the proposed expansion of the Fauntleroy ferry dock and the installation of a two-story passenger loading facility.

First, Fauntleroy is different from most other communities that host a WSF docking facility in that it receives virtually no direct benefit from ferry operations. Ferries are a lifeline for island communities, and a significant convenience for the Kitsap Peninsula. They funnel workers into downtown Seattle, as well as smaller employment centers. And, ferry traffic benefits at least some businesses in the traditional downtowns of Edmonds and Mukilteo. In contrast, Fauntleroy is a residential neighborhood and ferry traffic largely bypasses its small business district. Drivers who exit the ferry are just passing through on their way to somewhere else.

I supported—and still support—WSF's past proposal to reroute most Southworth traffic directly to downtown Seattle. That proposal makes sense. As the Kitsap Peninsula grows, it is unacceptable to burden Fauntleroy streets with additional vehicles that are more appropriately directed closer to their destination. I request that you to reopen this issue as you craft your recommendations on the future of Washington's ferry system.

I am unequivocally opposed to the proposed expansion of the existing ferry dock at Fauntleroy.

The King County Ferry District, created in part to preserve direct Vashon Island-to-downtown Seattle foot ferry service, is now fully funding the Vashon passenger ferry operations. We plan a 50 percent increase in service by July 2009. This is the correct direction for our transportation future—direct, efficient connections for ferry customers to employment and residential growth centers—not an expansion of congestion in residential neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dow Constantine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Dow Constantine  
Chair, King County Council  
District Eight