

March 11, 2025

Governor Bob Ferguson
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Senator Marko Liias
Chair, Transportation Committee
305 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40421
Olympia, WA 98504

Senator Curtis King
Ranking Member, Transportation Committee
340A Irv Newhouse Building
PO Box 40414
Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Jake Fey
Chair, Transportation Committee
415 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Andrew Barkis
Ranking Member, Transportation
Committee
427A Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Governor Ferguson, Chair Liias, Chair Fey, Ranking Member King and Ranking Member Barkis:

We are local elected officials from ferry communities across Puget Sound coming together to call upon state lawmakers to make robust investments in Washington State Ferries (WSF) to restore full ferry system service.

We thank state legislators for prioritizing and investing in the ferry system to build and maintain vessels and improve reliability in the ferry workforce. We also thank Governor Ferguson for his commitment to the ferry system and including funding to increase recruitment and retention of ferry crew. We urge lawmakers to continue prioritizing ferry investments to address the immediate needs our communities are facing due to reduced service.

Ferries are an essential part of our local communities. They bring tourists to our homegrown small businesses, hotels and restaurants. They transport our residents to life-saving medical appointments. They provide access to family and cultural connections. They get people to and from their jobs.

We recommend the following priorities to build and preserve vessels, ensure full staffing and provide short-term solutions to address service gaps.

Vessel Construction, Preservation, and Electrification

We must continue on the path to build five new hybrid-electric ferries and ensure resources are available to build one additional hybrid-electric ferry per year, if the goal of the 26-vessel

fleet called for in WSF's 2040 Long Range Plan is to be met. Adequate funding for preservation and maintenance of aging vessels must also be a budget priority to ensure existing vessels continue to operate to avoid further service interruptions.

Workforce Development

Retaining existing ferry crew, recruiting new staff and addressing upcoming retirements are vital to restoring and enhancing ferry service. We support the following workforce development initiatives:

- Maintaining investments to provide training opportunities for existing crew, add dispatch and vessel crew staff, and support workforce development programs.
- Governor Ferguson's priority of crew recruitment and retention.

Actions to Address Immediate Community Needs

Supplementing WSF service with state-funded local options and exploring creative solutions is necessary while ferry communities across the state wait for the ferry fleet to be fully restored. We recommend the state:

- Provide funding to maintain passenger-only ferry service in Kitsap County, King County and the San Juan Islands to bridge the gap to full service on WSF.
- Increase funding by \$900,000 to \$2 million for traffic control at Seattle, Fauntleroy, Kingston, Edmonds, Mukilteo and Bainbridge Island, allowing each terminal to get coverage during peak ferry travel times.

Action must be taken to preserve our marine highway system for our residents, businesses and visitors. Please ensure ferries and ferry communities are a priority in the Transportation Budget.

Sincerely,

Counties

Island

Commissioner Jill Johnson
Commissioner Janet St. Clair

Jefferson

Commissioner Heather Dudley-Nollette

King

Councilmember Jorge Barón
Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda

Kitsap

Commissioner Christine Rolfes
Commissioner Oran Root
Commissioner Katie Walters

San Juan

Vice Chair Jane Fuller
Councilmember Kari McVeigh

Snohomish

Councilmember Megan Dunn

Cities

Anacortes

Councilmember Carolyn Moulton
Councilmember Ryan Walters

Arlington

Mayor Don Vanney

Bainbridge Island

Mayor Ashley Mathews
Deputy Mayor Jon Quitslund
Councilmember Joe Deets
Councilmember Leslie Schneider

Black Diamond

Councilmember Tamie Deady

Bremerton

Mayor Greg Wheeler
Councilmember Jeff Coughlin
Councilmember Jane Rebelowski

Des Moines

Mayor Traci Buxton
Deputy Mayor Harry Steinmetz

Edmonds

Mayor Mike Rosen
The Edmonds City Council

Everett

Councilmember Paula Rhyne

Friday Harbor

Councilmember Steve Hushebeck

Gig Harbor

Councilmember Jeni Woock

Lynnwood

Councilmember Almaderica Escamilla

Mountlake Terrace

Mayor Pro Tem Bryan Wahl

Normandy Park

Deputy Mayor Sue-Ann Hohimer

Pacific

Councilmember Ray Helms

Port Orchard

Mayor Rob Putaansuu

Port Townsend

Deputy Mayor Amy Howard

Poulsbo

Mayor Becky Erickson
Deputy Mayor Ed Stern
Councilmember Gary McVey
Councilmember Doug Taber

Renton

Councilmember James Alberson

Seattle

Councilmember Robert Kettle
Councilmember Rob Saka

Shoreline

Mayor Chris Roberts

Ports

Port of Bremerton

Commissioner Cary Bozeman
Commissioner Axel Strakeljahn

Port of Everett

Commissioner Glen Bachman
Commissioner David Simpson
Commissioner Tom Stiger

Port of Kingston

Commissioner Stephen Heacock