

June 3, 2014

Wickkiser International Companies, Inc  
1416 Whitehorn Street  
Ferndale, WA 98248.

Mr. Steven King  
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission  
1300 S Evergreen Park DR SW  
PO Box 47259  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Subject: Letter of Protest re: TC-140399

Dear Mr. King:

We urge you to deny the application made by Sani Mahama Maurou dba Seatac Airport 24 (SA24) to provide scheduled Airporter Shuttle service.

Wickkiser International dba Airporter Shuttle has been providing Marysville/ Tulalip Resort with scheduled service along I-5 since 1985. We started our business with one van and now offer our customers 11 round trips, **on a modern fleet of vehicles**, every day between the Canadian border and Seatac airport. Our fares are the lowest (when evaluated on a per mile basis) of any other scheduled operator in Washington State and our safety record, as measured by the WUTC, DOT and DOD is outstanding. Additionally, we lead our industry in customer service through ongoing driver training, a state of the art online presence, a 24-hour live phone reservation center, and we are significantly involved in our community. By all measurements, our broad schedule and service area continues to satisfy both large and small cities and customer segments. Since our inception, we have carried and served over 3 million people on our shuttle service.

Airporter Shuttle has consistently operated an efficient scheduled service. Our business is connected to our Ferndale Operations Center where there is 24-hour dispatch, reservation service agents, maintenance, personnel, marketing, and management support and supervision. This infrastructure has helped Airporter Shuttle set the standard among **all** scheduled service providers. The following points emphasize how important this is:

- Quality Personnel - We believe that the value we bring to our customers is due to the skills of our employees, whether they are part of our corporate infrastructure or on the operating line. Our company is proud that our drivers are paid a good wage and because we now transport over 140,000 passengers each year, they also earn great tips. The result has been Outstanding Quality: good driver retention, consistent reliability, and excellent customer service.
- Sales and Marketing – Our company is consistently innovative in its approach to advertising. Our staff graphic artist has led the development of our Airporter brand. His work can be seen throughout all of our company's collateral materials and

internet sites. We often move beyond using the traditional print media and acquire space on large roadside billboards or in campus publications.

We also advertise on the radio, use social media, quarterly e-newsletter, and other various Internet formats. This gives us a wide consumer audience. Marysville has come to know Airporter Shuttle through its marketing programs, and trusts the Airporter Shuttle because of its on-time record, comfort, and convenience. To help identify our drivers as professionals, we provide them with shirts, hats and jackets with the Airporter logo embroidered on them. When we arrive at our stops, passengers know **and trust** they are dealing with a professional service provider.

- Safety – Airporter Shuttle is committed to a sustained focus on transportation and passenger safety, -Airporter’s efforts in managing safe practices have earned it top ratings from three separate inspection agencies, making it a verifiably safe company. These safety ratings not only provide our customers with confidence in our operations, but they also can be used to reduce the UTC’s risk in a liability lawsuit. In a lawsuit, the UTC will be able to respond that they did not ignore safety but instead choose the strongest certified carrier in Washington State to serve the people of Marysville **and surrounding area**.

#### Seatac Airport 24- Application

The application is generally without detail and illustrative of how unprepared and unaware SA24 is **for what is involved** in running a transportation company. This is magnified by SA24’s application to operation from three different cities.

No Safety and Operations Knowledge: SA24 holds out it’s sole employee as the person responsible for Safety and Operations, yet he has no documented experience in running a transportation company. SA24 has indicated that it will operate three distinct routes at the same time and from different locations. How is this possible for a single individual? This irresponsible plan illustrates SA24’s lack of awareness about transportation and is particularly concerning given the attention that the Federal DOT places on identifying and closing down unsafe, unaware and negligence passenger carriers. SA24 has provided nothing in their application to earn this trust. Their absence of discussion indicates a complete lack of understanding about safety.

Competing Schedule: SA24 has proposed a directly competing schedule with our Airporter Shuttle schedule. Out of their 9 southbound trips, 8 depart Marysville within 30 minutes of the Airporter. Out of their 9 northbound trips, 6 depart at the same time as Airporter and 3 depart between our trips. Furthermore, SA24’s proposed service runs along the same route as our Airporter and boards in exactly the same location as our Airporter Shuttle. SA24 is being predatory and is not offering the public a new product. The public interest will not be improved. Allowing SA24’s application dilutes our authority.

Support Statements: There are none. SA24 therefore has neither demonstrated public need nor that the Airporter Shuttle service is unsatisfactory.

## Conclusion

Airporter brings value to Marysville and the surrounding area by running reliable, safe operations through a 24 hour schedule that serves all of the county. Our community embraces us as is evidenced by our 27 years of operation, 22 daily trips and over 145,000 annual passengers. Our fares are the lowest on a per mile basis in the State and we are the most highly safety-credentialed company in the State. Airporter is providing service to Marysville to the satisfaction of the commission and the Marysville customer.

By contrast, SA24 appears to be a “fly by night” operation that is unprepared for handling the responsibilities of being a passenger transportation carrier and is being predatory by not providing true additional service. They have an incomplete application and have not demonstrated any abilities or experience dealing with the vehicle maintenance, driver training and safety requirements that are necessary when providing passenger transportation. The Federal DOT and UTC safety officers will cringe at SA24’s incomplete and negligent application.

We urge you to support Airporter Shuttle’s long-standing history of successful passenger transportation and deny the application made by SA24.

Sincerely

Richard Johnson  
President