

City of Oak Harbor
Municipal Pier Committee
790 SW Echo Loop
Oak Harbor, Washington 98277

June 14, 2005

Ms. Carole Washburn
Executive Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW
PO Box 47259
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

RE: DOCKET NO. TS-050443
FEET WET PARTNERS, "SARATOGA SHUTTLE", Lauver / Solin

Dear Ms. Washburn:

On behalf of Chairperson Helen Chatfield-Weeks and the members of the City of Oak Harbor's Municipal Pier Advisory Committee, this letter forwards our strongest possible support for the above referenced application from Feet Wet Partners to operate a passenger ferry service between Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Camano Island and Mukilteo.

The Oak Harbor Municipal Pier Committee was formed in 1998, under the direction of the Mayor of the City of Oak Harbor, for the purpose of participating in the concept, design, engineering and construction of a multi-modal transportation facility on the City's waterfront. The City's vision is a facility that would provide to all of the citizens of Oak Harbor and Whidbey Island improved connectivity and alternative means of transportation throughout the Puget Sound area, and that would in turn make our area more easily accessible to visitors. The facility we envision will provide for passenger ferry, tour boat and seaplane service, with connectivity to Island Transit and the city, county and state highway network. We have reached the point where the project is fully permitted, and the City recently contracted for final design and engineering. To date, the project has received funding support from local, county, state and federal agencies and most recently was identified for "earmarked" funding as part of the pending TEA-LU reauthorization bill. We are convinced this facility will become a reality, and that it will play a key role in meeting the transportation needs of the near future.

The City and the Pier Committee have also played a key role in studies intended to establish the feasibility and viability of passenger ferry service in Puget Sound. In fact, these studies have identified Oak Harbor as the key terminus serving all of Whidbey and Fidalgo Islands. We believe that passenger ferry service is essential to meeting the transportation needs of our citizens in view of increasing congestion and projected future growth. Further, we are convinced this service will be established and will succeed

primarily through the initiative of private operators who are willing to “test the waters” to meet this unfilled need.

The City of Oak Harbor Municipal Pier Committee applauds the initiative of Feet Wet Partners in their request to provide this inaugural passenger ferry service, and we urge the Commission to approve their application. The Committee members and I would be most happy to provide any other information and support the Commission might find useful. I can be reached by telephone at 360-675-4051.

For the Chairman:

N. Douglas Francis
Vice Chair