

April 27, 2004

TS-040794

Gregory A. Dronkert

Kitsap Ferry Company, LLC

197 Parfitt Way SW, Suite 100

Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

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RECORDS
MAY -5 AM 8:59
STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTIL. AND TRAFFIC
COMMISSION

Dear Sir:

This is in support of the proposal from Kitsap Ferry Company, LLC regarding the need for passenger-only service between Bremerton and Seattle, WA.

I believe that passenger-only service is a key element of transportation of the State of Washington as it provides for movement of people quickly with a reduced impact to our environment. I believe that when the State of Washington started passenger-only service in 1986 it recognized that this service is of vital importance to the people and employers of King and Kitsap counties and that this service provided a vital link within the overall transportation network. It should be noted that the Washington State Ferry System only discontinued it in 2003 due to a lack of funding.


The passenger-only service provided direct service to approximately 2,900 people each week day according to information available from the Washington State Ferry System. This allowed for a much shorter commute time for myself and many other regular customers of the passenger-only boats. This was not simply a convenience but when I or a member of my family became ill increased my ability to obtain needed care in a quick and more efficient manner than would otherwise have been available. Additionally, since my employer has an office in Bremerton the passenger-only ferry made me and other employees more quickly available for sudden staffing changes as we could change our physical locations quickly and thereby save the employer additional costs in lost man-hours and increase production within a relative short time span.

The current Washington State Ferry System schedule does not meet the demand in frequency of sailings and transit time that is needed for many people which restricts the activities both professional and personnel of the people of both King and Kitsap counties. I, myself, in order to ensure that I arrive at my workplace everyday on time must be aboard the 4:50am sailing in order to be in downtown Seattle by 7:15am. I am fortunate in being able to be on the 4:20pm sailing most evenings but I must admit that my attitude and adaptability are not always the greatest at that time since I have been either in commute or at work for over 12 hours. I commute to Seattle as that allows for greater opportunity for economic independence for myself and my family than is otherwise available. Although my employer has a small office in Bremerton, I would be required to step back down the career ladder in order to be at that office. I do not believe that would benefit either myself or my family as it would severely reduce the economic benefits currently available to us.

I have been informed that a private ferry operator has reached agreement with Kitsap Transit and has the support from Kitsap Transit to apply to the Washington Transportation and Utilities Commission for permit(s) which would allow for service on the Bremerton-Seattle route to resume passenger-only service on an ongoing basis.

There is certainly a need for this service between Bremerton and Seattle and I believe that this need is both immediate and urgent. I know that stress of the longer commute has strained relationships, both personal and professional, for many people and further reduced the potential earning power of individuals in Kitsap county because they cannot apply for positions which start earlier than 8:00am without losing a large amount of personal time in the untimely scheduled sailings currently available. I am sure that WSF believes it is doing all that it can based on its reduced capacity of ferries and reduced funding, however, I believe that passenger-only ferries have a definite advantage in many ways in providing service, reducing the load on the State highway system by reducing the number of vehicles using road surfaces, and assisting in keeping the current standard of our environment.

Sincerely,



Ella J. Vesterbeck (past Chairperson, Bremerton Ferry Advisory Committee)

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Bremerton, WA 98337