



ISLAND COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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June 22, 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:

As President of the Island County Economic Development Council, I take this opportunity to add our support for the creation of passenger ferry service within Island County and also service that would connect Oak Harbor to the Mukilteo area. It has been the desire of our local officials, and in particular the City of Oak Harbor, to add passenger ferry service to the cities plans for waterfront facilities that will revitalize existing harbor side business districts.

Island Transit transfer station amenities are within walking distance to the proposed Oak Harbor docking facility. Activity such as this service will create a truly multi-modal opportunities for local residents.

Additional routes planned to connect both areas of the County, Whidbey and Camano Islands, with regular ferry service will encourage commerce between these business districts, but more importantly, allow residents to access courthouse services without creating additional traffic on our roadways. Including the historic town of Coupeville in the proposed schedule will give the Front Street business district direct access to tourists and residents arriving at the Port-owned public dock facility. The recognition of a Mukilteo connection aligns perfectly with Washington State's planned Mukilteo intermodal facility, adding a train service alternative to already overused roadways of the Puget Sound basin for our residents.

Lack of transportation opportunity, the movement of goods and people, has been identified as a major threat to the State's overall economic health. Here in Island County, making passenger ferry service available, especially services funded by private companies, provides an answer to many of our transportation challenges that affect our area's economy.

Sincerely,

John LaFond

John LaFond
President
Island County EDC