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June 9, 2006

Attention: Mr. Gene Eckhardt
Ms. Carole J. Washburn
Executive Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, Washington 98504 -7250

Subject: Docket TS-060903 Aqua-Express Petition to extend the suspension of service to December 31, 2006

Dear Secretary Washburn:

We have reviewed the petition from Aqua-Express dated May 30, 2006 requesting an extension of the service suspension, and wish to provide public comment. We are very disappointed that there are no plans to resume the Kingston-Seattle foot ferry on July 1, 2006, contrary to the representations that were made to us previously.

The Kingston Express Association is a group of former riders of the Aqua-Express. Aqua-Express was a great service but did not last long. We are currently studying alternatives for a Kingston to Seattle foot ferry. One idea is to form a non-profit co-op type organization that would own and operate a ferry, with the riders doing much of the work.

The petition notes that "We look forward to working with the ferry riders, the WUTC and Kitsap Transit on resuming service between Kingston and Seattle". I am not aware of any ferry rider, or this association, being contacted by Aqua-Express, Kitsap Transit or the WUTC and asked to work with them.

The basis of the December 31, 2006 date is unclear. You should consider that the latest plans from Kitsap Transit mention June 2007 as the earliest date for resuming service between Kingston and Seattle. However, a June 2007 date is contingent on voter approval of a sales tax increase in an election in November 2006. Yet that election date seems unlikely and February 2007, if ever, is now being mentioned for a possible sales tax increase election to pay for foot ferries. A nearly identical proposal in 2003 was rejected by the voters 62% to 38%.

Will you please use your "quasi-judicial" authority to order Kitsap Transit, the partner of Aqua-Express, to provide the funds necessary to resume service on July 1, 2006. In the alternative, will you please grant the petition. However, in extending the "suspension", will you please make clear that the Aqua-Express license for the Kingston-Seattle route is not exclusive, and that other organizations are encouraged to submit a license application.

Sincerely,

Nels Sultan, Ph.D, P.E.
Manager, Kingston Express Association

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