

COMMENT FORM FOR: PETE DEBOER - ID# 1834

Consumer Information	
Confidential Comment <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No	Contact Method <input checked="" type="radio"/> Email <input type="radio"/> Mail <input type="radio"/> None
Name	PETE DEBOER
Organization Company	COMMISSIONER, PORT OF KINGSTON
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Comment Information	
Theme	Open Date 12/13/2006
Filing Support <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Undecided	Closed Date
Source <input checked="" type="radio"/> Email <input type="radio"/> Mail <input type="radio"/> Phone <input type="radio"/> Web	Web Create Date
Public Involvement Lead	John Cupp
Duplicate Comment <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

Description Respected Members of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission,

I come to you asking that you grant Aqua Express their request for extension of the suspension of service for the Kingston / Seattle POF route.

As one of only three publicly elected officials in the town of Kingston, I am constantly and repeatedly asked "When are we going to get the POF ferries back in Kingston?" I reply by impressing on the citizens on how important it is to get involved with and support Kitsap Transit in the development of a regional west sound system of POF service between Seattle and the entire Kitsap Peninsula region.

The February vote on the sales tax assessment in support of the service will become the final resolution and I am encouraging everyone to get out the vote and get involved and support the issue. The brief service that was provided by Aqua Express in 2005, was enjoyed and used daily by a core group of commuters who were extremely satisfied with that program. They were all very disappointed when the service stopped.

It is unfortunate that several factors including escalating fuel prices, low ridership and the legislature's refusal to allow the company to expand into the south sound route caused the service to be suspended. The spirit, willingness and financial investment of the Aqua Express partners to take on the challenge were truly commendable. The Port of Kingston Commission, the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Kitsap County Commissioners and Kitsap Transit were in complete support and were very

disappointed when the service had to be suspended. Now, Kitsap Transit and the owners of Aqua Express have worked exhaustively throughout this year to come up with a viable plan that will provide this region with a sensible approach to passenger only ferry service. The Kitsap Transit / Aqua Express plan will reduce congestion on SR 305 which is already over capacity on Bainbridge Island nearly six hours daily. It will encourage use of transit and van/car pool conveyances and most importantly give precious time back to the lives of the citizens who commute from Kitsap and North Pierce Counties to the urban core of Seattle. One need only to look south at the San Francisco Bay area to see a system that is up and running and has expanded to become a world class POF network in less than ten years. This system embraces a multitude of municipalities, counties and urban centers that work together successfully. The Puget Sound region could enjoy the same caliber of service if only a viable system gets off the ground. Please do not force the planners working on this system back to go back square one.

Aqua Express brings to the table the most experienced operator of passenger only vessels in the northwest. If we fall back from where we are today in providing POF service to the region, it will be years before another group will be interested in investing in such a project.

It is also critical to the economic vitality of the west sound region to have POF service available. When the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge is complete and the toll is placed on that route, every citizen of Kitsap, Jefferson and North Pierce Counties will be held hostage to a transportation system that requires some sort of cash payment to leave our neighborhood. The POF option provides the opportunity to travel to the urban center and beyond while leaving our cars behind. Too many people have worked so hard and dedicated so many resources in this effort for it to be delayed any further.

Please approve the request from Aqua Express Inc., to extend their suspension of service so that their partnership with Kitsap Transit can be developed to provide this long over due and fundamentally necessary service to the citizens of west Puget Sound.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Pete DeBoer,
Commissioner, Port of Kingston

Attachments

Follow-Up Information	Other Follow-Up Information
Follow-Up <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	Other Follow-Up <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Follow-Up Staff	Other Follow-Up Staff
Follow-Up Complete <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	

Issue Information	
Issue ID	127
Company	Aqua Express, Llc
Filing	061812
Staff	Danny Kermode