

I would like to address the issues the UTC will allow the IBU to argue in its protest of private Kingston-Seattle passenger-only ferry service. Private service wouldn't adversely affect WSF because WSF has no comparable Kingston-Seattle passenger ferry.

The estimated round-trip cost of the private service is \$10-12. Round-trip on WSF peak-season is under \$6, under \$5 with commuter books. This price will not be undercut. A passenger on WSF Kingston-Edmonds must make a transferred bus trip to approach downtown Seattle. This takes hours. The Sounder train has very limited service. North Kitsap residents driving to Bainbridge to get to Seattle is causing gridlock every day on highway 305. This shows that there certainly IS a need. The Bainbridge-Seattle WSF is packed every weekday, sometimes no seats are available. Many in Kitsap must work in Seattle because that's where the jobs are. Aqua Express represents a consortium of groups that have seen this need for years while WSF has failed to relieve it. Aqua Express has studied and determined that this is a viable and profitable service.

I'm biased - I live in Kingston. My wife, commuting to downtown Seattle, has a 13-hour day. Is the IBU biased? WSF Food Service has again been delayed because the winning bidder hasn't agreed for its employees to be paid as IBU members. Is this also behind the IBU's claim that Aqua Express isn't "financially sound enough"?

I ask the UTC to look at the big picture. The presence of bodies of water must be addressed in our transportation system. That's why we built bridges across Lake Washington. To grow and prosper, we must make our transportation system more easy and efficient. This attracts the most valuable workers and companies here along with the increased tax revenue these bring to our state. Please allow Aqua Express to provide this essential transportation service.

Thank you,
Brian Stevens