



March 27, 2009

This Week:

- Senate Transportation Committee Budget
- Elwha status
- Meeting with US Government Accountability Office
- Meeting with community representatives

Senate Transportation Committee Budget

The Senate Transportation Committee (STC) budget came out on Wednesday. The key elements of the budget relating to WSF are:

- Construction of four 64-auto ferries between 2009-2013
- Maintaining service between Anacortes and Sidney, B.C.
- Assumes no more than 2.5 percent fare increase
- Directs the Transportation Commission to develop a fuel surcharge mechanism
- Begins funding for a vehicle reservations system

I appreciate the Senate's careful consideration in developing the budget, specifically recognizing the need for new ferries. I attended the hearing on the STC budget on Thursday. We will continue to engage with legislators on the WSF preferred approach to size and timing of vessels, which includes three 64-auto ferries and two 144-auto ferries. The House Transportation budget is yet to be released and there is much more work to be done before anything is final.

Elwha status

The Elwha was removed from service in the San Juan Islands after service was completed on Tuesday, March 24. Crews had been monitoring and troubleshooting a drive motor concern before deciding to remove the vessel from service. This planning prevented a potential mid-day mechanical failure and allowed crews to mobilize quickly to minimize service disruptions. The 34-auto Hiyu, our only back-up vessel, took over inter-island service, allowing the other vessels on the route to shift and cover the Elwha. Crews at Eagle Harbor are inspecting the Elwha to determine how long it will be out of service. I greatly appreciate the patience of our customers during this service disruption.

Meeting with US Government Accountability Office

On Tuesday, members of our Security Office and I met with representatives from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for an in-depth discussion about ferry security. The GAO has been tasked by Congress to produce a report on the status of security on high-capacity passenger vessels, including ferries and cruise ships. We broadly discussed WSF security measures subsequent to maritime transportation security act regulations, including topics such as security measures we've implemented, potential security risks, and our relationship with our security partners.

Meeting with community representatives

I, along with experienced WSF vessel engineers, met with several community leaders to discuss the size and timing of new ferries on Thursday. We covered WSF's preferred approach to vessel construction and answered questions about the 64-auto ferry (Island Home) design. I appreciated their time and thoughtful questions.

Next Week:

- Senate Transportation Committee Meeting
- Meet with Pierce County Executives
- Meet with King County Ferry District
- First day of the last month of legislative session

David Moseley's weekly updates are available on the WSDOT Ferries Division Web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/weekly.

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