

WASHINGTON STATE FERRY

PUBLIC HEARINGS - JANUARY 2009

Kingston, Washington

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Reported by: Linda M. Grotefendt, CCR
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PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 1: First of all, I'd like to make -- there's still some empty seats. If you can move in, because some people are out in the hall there and maybe even going away. So if you see a seat, or if you can move in more, please do that.

And there's also some clipboards back there on the table. If you could pass them around. If you can't testify, use the pink sheets to write out your comments. And for those of you standing, a clipboard might be -- it's got a pen attached so that you can turn in written comments. Everything you have to say is very important to us.

So I'm just going to make it real quick here. Just some general comments. We will be turning in our comments later.

First of all, we feel local governments need more time to turn in their comments. The plan, as you know, was released on the 21st of December. But since then, we have had the holidays, we've had snow days; and then the enclosures came out about a week later. And we also have a presidential inauguration that many leaders are going to, which occurs on the 20th.

So our concern is -- one concern is that a plan of this magnitude really needs very deliberate consideration. A lot of the plan is familiar territory. And certainly Plan B isn't. The level-of-service stuff isn't.

So we feel that the local jurisdictions really need time -- more time to get their comments in so that, when the plan goes to

the Legislature, they have the benefit of the local review of the plan.

Other just general comments. First of all, the plan is being driven by the high cost of ferries. But we don't see a lot on the ferries to try to reduce the acquisition costs in the plan, to reduce the cost of ferries. For example, what are the consequences of a sole-source bid that is very high? What are the consequences of not being able to use federal funding? What are the consequences of maybe extending the life out to push the costs off to later years?

So if that's driving the service cuts, then that needs to be looked at as well as the service cuts. Actually, we may lose a lot of jobs by making the service cuts that we gain by buying in Washington, for example.

I think Plan A is the minimum. I question the real savings of cutting a night run on the Kingston/Edmonds. You've got certain work rules. You buy your labor in certain chunks. You need to pencil that out.

We would recommend putting your backup boat here in Kingston and using a smaller boat instead of a jumbo for the late night, which would be a more efficient way to carry cars across.

And then maybe incentivizing trucking traffic to go at night so they could miss the traffic in the afternoon, because we are the major thoroughfare to the Olympic Peninsula. So a lot of freight and stuff has to go through here for their economic --

One thing missing in the plan, of concern. We do talk about passenger-only ferries, but we don't have a lot of recommendations or proposals on how to make that happen. For example, a foot-passenger ferry can't compete with a one-way fare system. A two-way system doesn't work for a system that only charges one way, as was pointed out with the last ferry service here. If you depress passenger prices well below market value, then -- or the costs, then passenger ferries can't compete and they don't have a viable business plan.

We also feel there's a lack of measures in the plan to reduce Kingston's traffic congestion. We have a working group with DOT, Ferries, and Public Works to address the traffic-congestion issues. We're not sure if moving the tollbooth is really giving you the value. We think that the proposals of that working group should be part of your plan.

I'll cut it off there.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 2: Thank you. I'm Dennis Cziskie, with the Kingston Ferry Advisory Committee. I'm a resident of Hansville. The residents of Hansville are adamantly opposed to Plan B in any shape or form. The Plan A -- further, we feel that Plan B has not been vetted with the community. It's not been vetted with the local governments, and we believe the ESB 2358 requires that. Also, we feel that Plan A does not address the 40-percent ridership growth that you are anticipating. And it's essential that that be met -- addressed.

Further, we don't think that you have adequately addressed the impact on the communities of either of these plans, formally, and that those -- that impact has not been assessed and has no action taken to mitigate that impact. And we feel that that is very important not only from the effect that your service would have economically, culturally, and socially.

People who are ferry-dependent cannot live with Plan B. And Plan A, with no plan for growth, does not give us much alternative either. So we also think that the State has been negligent from the standpoint that they have not planned for this necessary funding over the years, and that Transportation, DOT, has not budgeted for the necessary subsidies for operating costs.

Further, my experience in industry indicates that you need to separate operating costs from capital costs in all of your budgeting and in all of your planning; and that they are so convoluted and meshed together in your plan that it's impossible, virtually, for any organized body to address either one effectively.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 3: Before I begin, for those who don't want to speak, please, the pink comment form -- make sure you get one, send it in.

My name is Paul Lundy-Norris, and I'm a resident of Kingston, Washington, and I'm a daily ferry commuter. So I agree with everything that Walt and Dennis have said tonight.

I feel that Plan B is unacceptable. This is exactly the opposite direction that the State needs to be going, especially when you consider your forecasts show that this would be disastrous to ferry-dependent communities.

Plan A. I'd say it's a good starting point for conversation but, definitely, it meets what I would consider the minimal standard of what we need to do. Your forecasts show that we need more. So why are we planning for Plan A when we really need to be going beyond that?

It just seems to me that the ferry-acquisition plan really isn't consistent with your forecast, so it leads me to believe that your acquisition needs to be greater than 22 vessels. I read that very consistently here in the plan, that you're really not meeting it.

Reservation systems. There isn't enough detail in your plan for somebody to really wrap their arms around it and find out how it affects them. There must be more detail, especially when it surrounds commercial traffic, commuters, and local folks.

I hear a lot of comments on the ferry, "Well, I'm against reservations." I mean, because they don't know anything about it. I mean, I've been going to a lot of the public meetings, and even I -- I understand that it can be a good thing and it can reduce those peak periods. But I think that we need to see more detail, specifically since you are considering Kingston to be one of the next pilot programs.

And fares. I personally have had enough of the fare increases, and I would really like to see you suggest to the Legislature that your citizens have had enough. So I want it to be clear that I oppose increases in fares, and specifically for walk-on passengers. You should be giving incentives to get people out of their cars.

And your transit improvements don't appear to go far enough. Now, I know that there are some transit improvements for the Kingston side, and I think that Walt's correct in that there's some very simple, low-cost solutions to that. We don't need to move terminal things. We just need to provide access to buses and to work with local transit.

I'll leave it at that and let other people speak for other stuff.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 4: My name is Earle Willey. I reside in Indianola. I didn't get in a fight tonight. I tripped on the sidewalk.

Now, you folks have got a tough job. The ferries are bridges and State highways. That's a fact. Everybody agrees to that. So therefore, the State ought to be financing most of it. If you can spend the money that the State does to take the snow off the passes, they should be able to find money to take care of the ferries for ordinary, routine work.

I think there are some things that could be done. The problem -- everybody isn't going to agree with my views on this,

but there are no bridges anywhere with restaurants and restrooms and work tables. It's not necessary that somebody do their morning vanity stuff on the ferry. Most of the people don't have to get out of their vehicles.

You could reduce the space on these ferries for use of passengers in a manner that you could add more space if the time comes. But we don't need all of that extra stuff pushing it off across the bay and back and forth. Our ferries ought to be bridges and they ought to be spartan. They ought to be safe and economical for passengers.

Perhaps all of our commercial vehicles could be forced to run at night when they have lesser loads and give them a break on some of the fares. These businesses over here support a lot of people, and they have to go over there and back to get goods and get merchandise. We don't need tourist attractions on these vessels. The ferry is part of the highway, it's not a tourist attraction. If you're going to have some tourist attraction, let the tourist industry pay for that, not the fare out of the passengers.

That's about it. Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 5: Hello. I live in Lake Forest Park. I own a business in Kingston. I see a lot of these people when they're walking off the ferry and I'm walking on.

The survey that was taken during the summer, referring to tourists, was designed and implemented at such times that it maximized the input of tourists and minimized the input of your

ferry commuters, your year-round, core customers.

Now, I've had plenty of experience designing surveys, customer surveys, and implementing them, and I know what I was seeing. And it had a definite bias to it as well.

Secondly, until you start to unlink the Central Sound fares and charge the same amount -- when you charge the same amount for the Kingston run as you do the Bremerton run -- the Kingston fare box is over 100 -- the fare revenues are over 100 percent of the costs. And I'm not sure what the Bremerton fare-box-revenue percentage is, but I'm sure it's well below 80 percent; probably below 70 percent.

And so until you do things like that, your core customers, who really pay their own way, are going to be subsidizing other customers in your business.

This is a business, even though it's owned by the State, but do you know who the owners of the State are? These people right here, the people who pay the taxes and pay your salaries. And, you know, we have felt for a long time that there hasn't been much accountability toward the owners of the ferry system.

These are things that need to be addressed. Cutting service is not an option. Cutting service is going to make it difficult for the people who work the graveyard shift and the second shift at Boeing and other companies in the area. They live over here, and they don't have any control over what shift they work.

It's going to affect commerce, it's going to affect downtown

Seattle, because people aren't going to be able to go and do things in the evenings. It's not a good option to reduce service.

Unfortunately, the people of this state voted for I-695, which put us in the position that we're in right now. We live with it. We have to adjust to it. But the State Department of Transportation needs to become more creative and more realistic in how it approaches the situation that they see in front of them.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 6: Hi. My name is David Bruyn, and I frequently ride the ferries but I'm not a commuter. One of the problems with Plan B is that it drops the extra summer boat for Kingston. We have a lot of congestion here, and we're going to have more. The Kingston run and the extra boat pay for themselves. It's a paying proposition. And we need to keep the extra summer boat.

The third boat, that is, the extra boat, could be a small one and could be used in lieu of larger ones on night runs or runs that don't have as many people.

We all know that we need more boats. As you know, the first new one is being built for the Puget Sound/Keystone run, and it's built on the design for a boat that ran from Martha's Vineyard. That boat bid out nationwide and was built in 2006 for \$32 million.

Now, your boat is designed like that -- actually, with some reduced amenities. And that boat, because it was bid out only in the state of Washington, is going to cost us \$65 million. Now,

what we couldn't do with \$30 million. Let me tell you what we can do.

And worse -- worse, much worse is that we don't qualify for federal subsidies or stimulus money when bids are not offered nationwide. We are going to exempt ourselves very nicely from the Obama subsidy program and the Obama construction program.

You know, if we were smart, we could go in -- we have the plans. We could bid out, in as little as six weeks, and they could lay the keels for our boats. And that's employment somewhere in this country.

I know it's unpopular but, if we need more money for the system, there is always the gas tax. A couple of cents would do a lot of good. We all were paying \$4 not so long ago and maybe are a little more receptive to five or 10 cents, or two cents. I'll go with two. A lot of money in that for extra ferry revenue for building boats.

Now, ferry increases have been held to two and a half percent each year. But this is coming up for reconsideration by the Transportation Commission. I want you to convey in the strongest language possible that increases in excess of two and a half percent need to be taken off the table.

Also, the frequent-user tickets are apparently up for grabs, and I think that's an excellent program, and I would say let's keep that. Now, I need your voice. The 9:00 p.m. closure. I would like all of those who disagree with the 9:00 p.m. closure to

stand.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 7: Brad Eccles, long-time resident. I was just wondering. You know, we also voted on Proposition 48, which was really long-term, covered our needs for transportation. We had PO boats. It tied in with the rail system, the Sounder, and all that. Then, of course, 695 came along and wiped that out.

So since 695, we've been dependent on this, what do you call it, tax or whatever from the 695, the -- (by the audience: "MVET"). Yeah. Off the excise thing, the \$15 or whatever that we were going to pay for our tabs, and that's how we're funded.

We've had 10 years to come up with other funding and it hasn't happened, and I'm just wondering if we're going to move in the direction that you're trying to take care of that. It's been a long time, and we keep doing studies. Nothing ever happens.

That's all I have.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 8: My name is Al Catriz, and I'm from Kingston. I ride the ferry not too often. I don't want to talk -- I concur with, basically, what I've heard so far. However, there is an excellent column in today's "Sun" by Pam -- and I don't know how to pronounce her last name, but Zama? Is she here today? She was here? Oh, she did. Okay.

Anyway. You all should read it. I'm not going to go into it. I only have three minutes. It's entitled "State Shouldn't Ignore Ferries." It's very good. Basically, I'm going to send it

in on my comments.

That's all I have. Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 9: I'm only 19 years old, but I've been riding the boats off and on my whole life, and I just found out about this hearing. I definitely think Plan A is the way to go for the most part, but there are one or two things from Plan B that I think should maybe be tied in.

One of them is closing the Sidney run. I've been told that the demand for that has been going down and, if we close that, that would help save fuel and a lot of money.

I definitely disagree with closing the Edmonds boat at 9 o'clock. Even the jumbo boats on the 10:35 p.m. sailing out of Edmonds, often, there's so many cars now that they have to put some people on the upper decks.

And also, I definitely think that, with the vessel replacements here, Plan A up here looks a lot better.

And also, speaking of capacity, the other day, I was reading the maintenance schedule online, and it said that this spring, for six weeks, the Hood Canal Bridge is going to be shut down. And the Kitsap is going to be on this route for those six weeks, reducing vehicle capacity by 64 cars. I think that, really -- that's going to be really bad for the commuter hours.

What I think that we should maybe do is, for the month of May, leave the Kitsap on the triangle route and have the Kaleetan come here instead and then just have the Kitsap here for the first

two weeks in June, when the Kaleetan has to go out when the Issaquah comes back in. Because having the Kaleetan here would only reduce it by 44 cars and would help keep traffic moving, which is important.

And I also think that, to help keep things moving, is to have the big semi trucks and the bigger traffic come at night, when there's a lot more room.

And that's it for me.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 10: Ed Ramey, Hansville, retired. I'm still retired. I only burn up commuter tickets on a regular basis, spend them all.

My concern is that, when we lost a boat on Port Townsend, local business was impacted. Sales tax revenues dropped. Long-term, if we behave in those ways, we will not only impact short-term collection of sales tax, but we're going to impact property values, property-tax collections.

The ability to live in Kitsap County is fostered by the fact that we're able to get to jobs that actually pay. I'm able to get over and babysit my grandson in Kirkland. I'm able to have season tickets to the Seattle Men's Chorus. If you chop off the 9 o'clock boat, all that ends.

You have had 10, plus or minus, years to plan for the impact of Eiman's initiative, which was unconstitutional but was voluntarily enacted by the Legislature. It would seem to me that management needs to be advocating for the system. Management

needs to be advocating to the Legislature to pick up its share of the responsibility to provide the capital funds.

You projected a 40-percent growth rate, and yet Plan A basically is zero growth. You have started negotiating with the Legislature by shooting yourself in the foot. Anytime you come to the Legislature for any legislative action, you're up for compromise. If your bottom line -- or your top line is the bottom, you're destined to lose.

Management is tinkering around the edges. Striping the streets in Edmonds as they approach the terminal so that we lose the use of a public roadway 95 percent of the time--we use it for a parking strip the other 2 or 5 percent--is a waste of taxpayer money.

When management is seen as weak and ineffective and making proposals that tinker around the edges and not meeting the fundamental responsibilities to get boats bid and built and maintained and service provided in accordance with need, this creates an image of State government that provides ammunition for the small-government/no-tax/low-tax proponents.

You're destined to kill us. You're going to kill the economy of Kitsap County.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 11: I'm Pete DeBoer. I serve on the Kingston Port Commission. I am not speaking as a port commissioner tonight. I haven't discussed this with my fellow commissioners. I am the president of the Kingston Chamber of

Commerce, and I'm speaking on behalf of the citizens and the business community of North Kitsap Peninsula.

The Washington State constitution was referenced in this op-ed editorial this morning. In Section 40 is about four paragraphs that is pretty enlightening. But it dictates to the State that excise taxes collected on fuel, vehicles, and all other State revenue intended to be used for highway purposes shall be placed in the State Highway Trust Fund to be used exclusively for highway purposes.

Five definitions of "highway purposes," the fifth one being "operations of ferries, which are part of any public highway, county road, or city street." And that's what Washington State Ferries is supposed to do for us. They are just an extension of the highways, the streets, and the roads of our state.

We pay to the State -- I believe it's a little over 40 cents a gallon right now for the gas that we use. It's being used to snowplow Snoqualmie Pass. It's being used for avalanche control. It's being used for lots of things. Some of it needs to come back to the ferries for the capital-improvement program.

When people make a choice to live on the Kitsap Peninsula, ferries are a huge part of their decision. That same process may be used by people making a decision to live in Bellevue or Mercer Island. They count on the bridges. We count on the ferry system as our bridge to the east side of Puget Sound.

I don't think that you can get away with closing bridges

across Lake Washington, at the Columbia Gorge, or the wetlands in Factoria, on I-90, for a half hour and get away with it.

Tourism is one of Washington State's and the Governor's most precious commodities. In 2006, visits to the Olympic National Park were 2,700,000 people. That's down from three and a half million two years -- the downward trend started when the summer surcharge went on the ferries.

The next highest national park that gets visited in the state of Washington is Lake Roosevelt, which is just a little over 1 million a year; followed by Mt. Rainier National Park, which is a million a year.

This third boat needs to stay in Kingston. It's more central to where it could be needed for emergencies, and it can fill in the gaps.

Peak pricing won't work. How about premium pricing, parentheses, discounts, for larger vehicles, RVs that use off-peak periods and could fill up the empty decks at night.

Reservations. I'm not for them. It hasn't been tested enough. The Port Townsend model doesn't work for Kingston. We have too many tourists that are random users of the system. It will confuse them. They'll take the tourist dollars to other states. They won't like it here. They won't have a good memory of Washington State, because their memory will be of a fouled-up ferry system.

Kingston congestion. We need to deal with it. We need to

have a plan.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 12: My name is Lee Devens. I ride the ferry to work in the morning and come back in the evening. I'm not politically conservative, but I'm conservative when it comes to decision-making and thinking that it needs to be very careful and not rushed. And there isn't any way of looking at Plan B having any information about local transit -- you know, it's not -- it's out of the context.

There is no context to know how you would get to the ferries, when you could get back and forth to work, what the transit -- what the expectations of local transit systems actually is in terms of providing foot ferries, how that would work. You know, I can't look at anything about it and say: "Oh. Well, I could get on a boat at, you know, the same time and get to work and get home from work." And that's the problem.

I would have to say no to Plan B only because I know I can get to work -- back and forth to work with Plan A. Plan B, without knowing a lot of other information -- I think any legislator also would, hopefully, say, "I can't make a decision. I don't have the information" -- "enough information here to know what's going to fill all of the gaps that the Plan B would leave."

The other thing I wanted to comment -- wanted to say is, I also had thought about possibly, when shifting traffic, if you need to shift to try to spread the vehicles out into different boats -- incentives, you know, to those people that can put their

truck on an earlier or a later boat, the boat doesn't have that many vehicles on it -- that you actually give them a price break rather than just the stick of higher prices as the boats get more crowded.

And also the comment before. I've noticed we don't really need probably as much passenger room. But I don't know, that in building new vessels or whatever, you could add more cars up there. So I don't know that it would make much sense.

I don't understand what the role of the ferries would be in Plan B, also, because you mentioned the State would take over that as the core marine highway. And so I don't even understand what your role would be, then, at that point. Or maybe it sort of would cease to be. I really don't know.

That's all I have to say. Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 13: Hi. My name is Evan Stohl and, to start off, I want to say that I do appreciate the effort you guys have put into all this process, and I recognize the problem. We also recognize that there is a State funding problem.

My concern, however, is the draft plan presents us with false choices which do not address the problem. To start off, they treat the ferry system as though it's not part of the highway system. I know this isn't all your doing, it's in the law. But that's what's happened.

It also compares, basically, a current operation to a Plan B, which is a vastly reduced operation. And though you may tell us

that's the bottom line, it's not in the plan. It doesn't state that, and I'm not sure the Legislature is going to understand they're not just presented with this plan or that plan as opposed to something else.

For the last 10 years, the Legislature -- in the plan, it says, "For the last 10 years, the Legislature has filled the funding gap created by I-95 budget cuts by allocating transportation funds to Washington State Ferries that would otherwise have supported the highway system." At the same time, it says, "The Washington State Ferry is an essential part of the highway system." I don't understand how you can have the ferry system taking fund money from the highway system when they are the highway system.

They even take fuel tax -- I estimated about \$6 million in fuel tax the ferry system pays, and I don't know how close that is, but that goes into the motor-vehicle fund as well. And if we get it back, it's kind of the State giving us our own money back. It's a disconnect between things.

I continually read about a fare-box recovery system as being maybe 70 percent overall, although it's 112 percent in Kingston. However, the way that's calculated is really an accounting process that's used.

One of the things it includes, for example, is administrative costs as opposed to direct costs of operating the vessels, operating the terminals. It includes maintenance, it includes

administration.

The rest of the highway system doesn't have those included. Their fare-recovery system is zero compared to our 70. I think we're doing pretty well if you make that comparison.

If you remove those, by the way, and the fuel tax, it's going to be about 106-percent recovery; if those aren't counted as part of the recovery system, about 160 percent for the Kingston/Edmonds run.

Let's see. Where am I? Okay. I did that one. Also, I wanted to state that, from the Edmonds ferry terminal to my house is 102 miles. I can't imagine how you're going to eliminate those evening ferries and I'm going to be able to get home in any way, shape, or form. There is no passenger service there. And according to the law, there will not be any passenger service to there, because we can't compete with the ferry system.

Enough.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 14: Hello. I'm Richard Urbauer, and I live in Kingston. I've retired here because it's a wonderful place to live, and the ferry system used to be pretty damn good.

We haven't really looked at what the next 10 years or 20 years are, because we plan on building 22 vessels and so forth. We don't need some more vessels. We need a bridge.

With a bridge between here and there, we would open up Highway 101, 104. We would be able to go across to Edmonds, run

an awful lot of people back and forth very simply. Let's go for Plan A-plus.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 15: Hello. I'm Tecla Legge. I'm a daily ferry commuter, and I came off the 5:50 ferry out of Edmonds, so I may have missed the explanations of Plan A and B. However, I tried to read Plan A and Plan B and, for instance, the new level-of-service definition seems to allow any undefined changes to be attributed to accommodating the new measure of level of service. So I really cannot figure out how the level of service is going to impact us.

I also don't always trust the way the data is collected, and I'm not talking about the surveys of passengers, but how measure of service is -- level of car usage for instance.

I was on the Edmonds one weekend afternoon. There was cars going all the way up the hill, and yet the ferry gate taker -- ticket-takers were not allowing cars into the lot. We managed to be, for some reason or another, allowed into the lot, which left with what seemed like a less than half- full boat.

And the explanation was that somebody wanted to make the ferry be on time. They were trying to catch up with their on-time record for the running of the boats. I was so shocked at that, on a weekend, with traffic going all the way up the hill in Edmonds.

And the cost now for my daily commute is a ferry plus a train. The cost of that commute is already \$10 a day. I don't know how any increases -- and that's a walk on the boat and a walk

on the train.

I don't know how families can deal with any increase over that. That's actually quite -- I mean, I think that's an expensive commute. And that's not driving, parking, or anything. I don't even want -- I don't even add it up myself, because I don't want to know how much money I spend on my commute.

Plan B. It looks like this cutting of the service sounds more like a threat to me than a realistic plan. It's -- maybe it's a joke. I mean, it's hard to even give an opinion on Plan A, because you look at Plan B and all you do is worry about: How the heck are we going deal with cutting night service?

Plan B is like an amputation, not only of the ferry service, but our life and our connections to our family. I have an elderly mother on the other side. We actually do go over at night, even after going back and forth to work every day.

That's basically all I have to say. I mean, I would love the comparisons to the ferry/passes. Why should we spend money on avalanche control and plowing and the whole thing if you're going to leave us with no plowing our way across Puget Sound?

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 16: Hi. Nels Sultan. I live in Kingston, and I commute to downtown Seattle every day. And I want to thank you for showing up here to take our comments. I read through your financial plan, and I think, frankly, it's a pretty weak document as a financial document.

I mean, the details, the numbers are really hard to follow and the only real summary that I could see is a single table that has 10 lines in it, totaling up to a three-and-a-half-billion-dollar deficit. Now, that really isn't a lot of detail to figure out where the numbers are.

I think there's a lot of cost savings possible here in the capital program and across the board. You mentioned one. I figured out, in your plan, that, if you add up all the ferry spaces you're going to buy and your vehicles, the cost per vehicle space on the ferries is one and a half million dollars per vehicle space in the 22-year plan. And for a comparable, I get that \$350,000 per vehicle space is in line with recent government ferry purposes.

And I point out that Pierce County's Tilikum 2 bought their ferries, which are operating right now between Keystone Harbor and Port Townsend, at a unit price of \$210,000 per vehicle space. So that's quite a difference; a 500-percent or more cost difference. Something is out of whack here, and I really think the cost assumptions, if you put those under a microscope, you could drive it down a heck of a lot and make most of this problem go away.

I have a bit more time. Look at the big picture. The fact there's a big deficit in transportation spending at the State level -- my attitude, partly, is: So what? Welcome to Puget Sound. I've never seen a big State transportation project, long-term, which didn't have some deficit somewhere in the

process. And I don't think that should be used as a basis for justifying the plan and massive cutbacks.

You know, most of the State transportation is planned for growth. The region is getting bigger. That should be the basis of our plan and not these massive cutbacks.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 17: Good evening, and thank you. My name is Lynne Danielson. I live in Poulsbo. I work in Edmonds and have been commuting there for the past 13 years on a five-day-a-week basis.

I actually went through and printed the whole plan. There are some discrepancies that would cause me to question the plan as a whole. Number one, I don't think I consider six one-hundredths of a percent of your riders as a representative sample. 23 million riders, 13,000 responses to questionnaires.

Findings. For some reason -- or funding. For some reason, in your projections, in the back, there's a \$2 billion decrease in fare-box revenue in the next 16 years as opposed to a 40-percent increase in ridership. Questionable conflict.

On another page, basically, 30 percent of the riders commute. Only 9 percent of those who travel can change boats, and that was the way the question occurred, but 38 percent are not flexible. If you have 60 percent that can take a different boat but only 16 percent of those can move to an off-peak hour, it appears to me that your flexibility rate is 82 cannot change from peak to

nonpeak, not 60 percent can.

Go back to I-695. I work in government. I know what 695 did, which is: absolutely nothing. 695 was declared unconstitutional. Go back to the Legislature; tell them to reinstate MVET. Get the money back.

I am really tired of everyone using 695 as an excuse for not having money. Go back. I'm not sure we aren't willing to pay that now. And if 695 had stayed, it would have sunsetted by now, so it would be gone anyway.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 18: Good evening. Thank you. My name is Rebecca Bilbao. I commute across the Sound five days a week. I make a connection with the Sounder five days a week. When we went through the review in December -- November/December, about the change of schedules, about doing away with the 5:50 boat, I was exceedingly vocal, because service schedules need to match up with public transit.

If you want people to get out of their cars, you have to match up with the transit system. They're building light rail on the other side of the water. They are building a tunnel on the other side of the water. They will build the bridges. There's no doubt that the 520 will go up. It will probably have a toll, but it will still go up. They will build more streetcars.

Public transit is absolutely necessary. You are public transit. You are not just a highway. And in order for us to

commute to our jobs, we have to be able to match up. And so what I see in this Plan A is wiggle room for the ferry system to not work with public transit, to not work with the Sounder, to not work with Kitsap Transit, to not work with Edmonds and King County -- excuse me, Snohomish and King County Transit.

The buses, the boats, the trains need to connect so that people can get to work and back. We don't have a choice. We have to work. You do too.

The green commitment is huge. The dollars -- I agree with what everyone else has said. Go back, ask for money. It's out there. People are voting for it. Go back.

Quit telling us that you're going to kill our county, kill our livelihoods, kill our ability to feel safe where we live, because, if you're cutting the evening boats, how far do we have to go to get across if we need medical care on that side?

What are the other issues that are going to be impacted by cutting evening boats? What are the -- the Plan B is: choke, right? The Plan A is: Maybe I can swallow it, but I'm scared. But, you know, I actually wrote down here "choke versus puke," but, you know...

If you're trying to see if we will -- if it's scaring us badly enough with Plan B we'll swallow Plan A, maybe that's it. But neither are acceptable at this time. There's not enough detail.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 19: Hi. You know who I am. I was

very dismayed to read an article in the latest Edmonds "Beacon" about the removal of the Union Gas pier that is being paid for, 100 percent, by the Washington State Ferries to the tune of millions of dollars. We're talking dismantling the entire pier and then also getting rid of all of the hazardous waste. I would estimate that project is multiple millions of dollars.

That is in mitigation, I understand, for your future ferry terminal at that end. The ferry terminal may not happen in my lifetime, that move. Why are you spending millions of dollars on a mitigation plan for a capital project that you have not even scheduled? That's my first.

The other thing, the amount of money that the State Highway Department is putting in for when the Hood Canal Bridge closes. They are -- they were offered other plans, but they are building facilities on both sides to be able to bring passengers back and forth to Hood Canal; a lot of money. We do see the value in Jefferson, Clallam, and over there.

What I want to tell you tonight is that I'm not speaking just on behalf of the residents of Kingston or the residents of Kitsap County. If you do Plan B on this run, you're going to kill everybody in Clallam County and Jefferson County, because their path is directly through Kingston.

And house values will crash. All those people up there that are planning for retirement in the sun belt, it's done. So don't just talk about Kitsap County and what you're doing to us. It's

everybody to the west.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 20: Yes, I'm Dick Osborn. I'm a resident of Kingston. And Plan A is really like waterboarding, and Plan B is really like torture on a rack. It's a false choice, obviously.

If you're going to have a strategic plan, the first question you should be asking is: What really is your business? Your plan presumes that you're going to design, build, maintain, operate, clean -- you're going to do everything to these ferries.

One of the things you should consider is reduction of 20 to 30 percent of your current operating costs. Those are easily obtainable if you outsource. But that is not considered here.

A number of other factors are not considered, such as a reduction of the administrative overhead burden that is placed on the operating budget. That should be placed on the capital budget, because that's where most of the expenditures are going to be occurring.

So if you're going to be doing a plan, you have to decide what your business is, and then you have to decide what your future revenue stream and your future demand are going to be. And neither of these plans anticipate the demand. They just make a presumption about the number of boats.

There are other alternatives to the boats that you already have. You can lease them; you don't have to buy them. You can

have somebody operate them; you don't need to operate them. You own some, lease some, have somebody else operate them. You can actually look at a systematic business plan for the operation of the entire system.

This is, unfortunately, not a business plan. It is a response to somebody somewhere about the number of boats and how we're going to scare people into not allowing this side of the Puget Sound to grow.

Either of these plans is really going to kill development. It's going to kill real estate. It's really going to hurt this part of the state very badly.

The other thing is, one of the reactions you'll get out of this room and the other room is, there is an implicit understanding that you fund our ferries, we fund your roads, your bridges, and other aspects of the State government. If that covenant is broken between this side of the Sound and the other side of the Sound, you wind up with a political nightmare where nothing gets done, and that would be a real tragedy.

So I hope you would rethink and start with the question: What is our business? What is our demand going to be? How are we going to serve that? And then you can figure out the rest.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 21: I'm Linda Paralez. I'm a member of the Kitsap Planning Commission and the Kingston Ferry Advisory Committee. I was at the Bainbridge meeting last night

and was very impressed by the testimony that we heard there. And I just wanted to add, one gentleman last night mentioned -- he was a couple of decades older than me. He got up and pointed out to us that we had not included in the plan the foresight of thinking about new technologies. And it so impressed me, I went home and got to thinking about what I know about adaptive management.

And in this plan, we've looked at adaptive management very myopically, as being something about a reservation system. And all of us know that our experience with WSF's ability to implement new technologies is less than stellar.

So I would encourage, as you go back and look at these plans -- if we're going to really think forward about adaptive management, we really have to look at our ability to even -- even thinking about implementing an elegant reservation system is not going to be easy at all, because we haven't got the current new technology implemented well. And that was supposed to be \$12 million, and it still doesn't work. And it certainly hasn't enabled us to reduce costs, if it was ever supposed to.

We aren't designing new boats, as the gentleman last night pointed out. We're designing into the next 22 years based on 100-year-old design plans.

And we're not using adaptive management techniques in that plan. We're not. And so Plan A is not acceptable. Plan B is not acceptable. Everybody has been telling you that. I don't need to repeat it.

But what's missing is that none of these plans are based on adaptive management techniques, concepts, strategies. They really don't have private-sector business-planning basics. You've been hearing that. I want to say that again.

And thank you for being here.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 22: My name is Glen Minsch. I'm a regular ferry rider, and I want to reinforce the point that was made earlier. I believe it was made by this gentleman. We don't have enough information. Your plans lack detail.

I don't know if I should support you or condemn you. When I look at this, the reservation system, maybe it's a fine idea. Maybe it's not. There simply isn't enough detail.

We look at the numbers, as people have pointed out who have looked at this more thoroughly than I have, and they can't tell if your numbers add up. Maybe they don't. We have to know more.

I'd like to be able to stand here and support you, but the track record of the bureaucracy is -- well, it leads me to assume, for self-preservation, that maybe you haven't thought it through. That may not be a fair assumption. If it's not a fair assumption, you have to educate me, okay? That's the first point I wanted to make.

And the second one is: I haven't heard anyone mention a small constituency, and that's the motorcycle commuters. That's another thing. I have no information to know how this is going to affect me.

Now, I'm not out there, riding in the downpour in January, because I enjoy it. I do it because of economic necessity and because of the flexibility it gives me under the current system. And I'm willing to sacrifice to keep that.

And one of the things that I think we need -- again, on the same theme of more information, there's -- I think it would be cost-effective to do some rider education. You know, we don't always park the most efficient way on the deck. As I understand it, you base your fares for motorcycles on the idea that you can put three motorcycles in a single car space. Sometimes we achieve that density but, more often than not, we don't. And when we don't, I think it's out of a lack of understanding by the riders.

You know, your deck crew -- they don't have the easiest job but, a lot of times, they're kind of disengaged. They stand there, and they kind of gesture vaguely at where they want us to go.

Now, my belief is that more people than not would comply and would attempt to park in a way that makes more effective use of the deck space if somebody told them what to do. Again, there's a lack of information. And you could address that, I think, very inexpensively by putting together, you know, a one- or two-sheet -- okay. Just pass on the information. Tell us what you want us to do, and we'll try to do it.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 23: Hi. My name is Tony Atkinson.

I sold papers on the Edmonds ferry dock when the San Mateo was the Black Ball line; fourth generation around the area. I'm retired now. And I'd really like to get my kids to come over and bring my grandchildren on a Sunday night and be able to get home.

You know, 3:30 waits right now -- we're talking about a 40-percent increase, and we're starting from a standpoint -- I really -- I think it was you that said we're starting with, you said, the goalposts. I think we've got the goalposts all right, but we've got the bleachers behind them as the other one.

Even Plan A is unacceptable with a 40-percent increase. We can't do this. I've commuted both ways. My kids went to school on these ferries. This is a marine highway. I remember when the State bought this out and said, "This is a marine highway." We've heard testimony tonight about the constitution saying it's a marine highway. Where is the money?

Can you imagine if somebody asked me to make a reservation to go on 520 Bridge? I see 4 billion going to do a tunnel, 6 billion may be going into 520. Where's our share?

One comment. The three-something-billion shortfall over 20 years. At least from anything I'm able to tell, if I view that in terms of expenditures on roads and highways and everything, over 20 years, \$3 billion is a drop in the bucket.

You know, how much do we spend in a year? Tell me how that's going to be amortized. What is the actual present cost of that? How much is the real shortfall? I don't think we're getting any

numbers here that make any sense to me at all.

The numbers for the boats are inflated. The numbers for the shortfall seem to be inflated. And any idea that this is a system that's owned by the taxpayers, for the taxpayers of this county and for the taxpayers of the whole state -- it needs to be subsidized the same way as the road, just like anybody else gets it.

And start from that standpoint and show us how we're going to cover that 40-percent increase and go to the Legislature and ask them for that, and then fall back to your Plan A. Plan B is absolutely ridiculous.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 24: Thanks for showing up. I know you're taking a few arrows here, but it's great. A couple of quick points, again, on 695. We are so tired of hearing that. We are -- and I think it was even the Governor at the time -- I think he said, "You know, this is a stupid thing." We should have fixed it years ago. They can change it. So 695 -- forget it. Unless I'm mistaken, the DOT revenue now is greater than it was when 695 was in. So where is the money going?

You know, secondly, I think the community impact on this is going to be sorely, sorely misunderstood. Oftentimes, I and many of the people here in this room talk to our legislators, and we only have a couple that are really concerned about this. And they always tell us, "Well, we're doing all we can." And I think they are, by the way, so I thank our legislators. But they always say,

"Well, it's the rest of the legislators that don't want to do anything about it."

Well, that's going to create a divisiveness. You know, if they look -- the rest of the legislators don't want to pay for our ferries, we're going to start saying, "Well, we don't want to pay for the new Spokane circumvent highway," whatever the case. So we're going to start -- the Spokane highway, whatever the case. We're going to have a divisive political impact here that I think all of the legislators are going to regret.

So I would really caution you. You know, when you came on board here, I was quite excited, because your credentials are impeccable and you're known as a great, world-class manager. But I would ask you, and, in fact, I would implore you to go back to the Legislature and tell them what you're hearing here tonight and represent us, and ask them. Because you have more access to all of the legislators than we do with just one or two. So that's the challenge.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 25: Tom Waggoner, a 40-year businessman that has used the ferries just about every day. First of all, the first thing I looked at here is, you tell us "draft long-range plan." Why don't you tell us, right here, what time frame you're talking about instead of hiding it back here? We're talking about going out to 2030.

I've taken a look at -- first of all, let's take Plan B off

the board. I think people have told you long enough that it stinks, so let's get rid of it.

Now, in fairness to all of us, it would be very nice if you went back to whoever is tasking you to do this and say, "Okay, we're going to call Plan A 'Plan B.'" Now, let's come up with a Plan A.

There's some ways that you could make yourself look good; very simple. For example, in Plan A, you talk about you're going to build or remodel -- you're going to build six boats and remodel one. When you put that into the new plan, tell us that you're going to save money by coming up with a standard plan and it's going to be the same plan for all six boats. You're saving us money. That's a very simple example of how you can make yourselves look good.

I would like to see you -- I look at this, and you guys have not given any thought to the year 2030 and what's happening in between. I don't know how much time you had to do this. I'm assuming it was a very short period of time. So give us another shot. Give us another chance and come back and really take a look at what's going to happen and how you're going to make it happen.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 26: I'll talk to you since I testified last night. I'm Steve Bauer, County Commissioner. I always like following Tom. Because I talked last night, I didn't want to talk but, actually, I've found what you've had to say tonight very interesting.

But I think it's important that you understand that the county commissioners and all of the mayors have taken an adamant stand against Plan B. And we're advocating that with our legislators; we have. And we also intend to spend a lot of time in this session trying to find money to support the system.

It's really clear, from looking at Plan B, that it's not a plan. And I want to speak in defense of David, because I think he's done a tremendous job of coming up and meeting with all the communities. He's been a good partner. My guess is that, under the pressure of the budget, he got instructions from the Governor's office to come up with another plan, and that's what he did.

So I think, you know, he's doing what he needs to do, and we're doing what we need to do, which is to suggest to the Governor that this isn't acceptable.

You know, when you really look at it, what it really is, is, is a budget that is awful for the State and a policy of no new taxes and no new fees. But what it's really done is it's just made another unfunded mandate to us, and we don't have the money to pay for that either. One plan that the system gave the legislative committee before it ended, before the session, called for six to nine passenger ferries in this county, and we don't have the money to support a fleet of six to nine boats.

So I think, you know, we need some work, and we've suggested to David, through this and several sessions, that we need to work

on that.

So I don't want to talk about Plan B, because I'm hoping it's dead on arrival. But I do want to talk about something that I think nobody has really talked about tonight, and I think it's an important piece here and one that we're advocating heavily with David.

And that is that, when we look at transportation, we tend to look at it piecemeal. So we look at roads over here in Kitsap County. We've got county roads, we've got city roads, we've got State roads. Then we've got Kitsap Transit, and then we've got the ferry system. And each one of them looks at it and designs their own little piece. But it isn't a little piece. It's an interconnected system, and we don't look at it that way.

So the Ferry folks here have done what they were told to do for their charge, to prepare to fund for their piece of the system, but it doesn't talk about how it relates with the rest of the system.

So if you look at the plan, one of the things that it talks about is the need to have better transit connections. But there's no money going to that. There is no real plan to make that happen. So if we talked about it as a system, then we would find a way to make those connections work.

We're talking about another 100,000 people coming into this county. We don't have the money to build the roads. We need to enhance the transit system. If we did that, we'd cut the

congestion on 305, we'd increase ridership on the ferries, we'd increase revenues for the ferries, and we'd help solve the problem. But because we deal with it a piece at a time, we didn't do that.

This state has policies on growth management. It has policies in terms of trying to reduce vehicle miles. We're talking about greenhouse gases. The State has a very strong policy on climate change. And it needs to step back and look at the whole system as a whole piece rather than little pieces at a time.

This system -- if we don't have service on Bremerton, if you draw back services on Southworth, it means that people drive around, and we create factors and costs on the rest of the system, and we're not talking about that, because we're not looking at the whole system.

So I think it's really important for the Legislature -- and we're encouraging our legislators to step back from just this piece and these two options to look at the entire system, because, if we do that, we may actually find that it makes sense to make different kinds of investments and put more money into the ferry system in order to achieve those statewide goals.

So I think David is a good listener, and I think that that will be passed on to the Legislature. That's what we're conveying to our legislators and hope you will as well.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 27: My name is Cheryl Kuss. I live in Indianola. I don't commute to work, but I use the ferry a lot, several times a week, and, when I read Plan B, I felt like I had just been told that I was grounded. Almost -- most of it -- well, I'd say half of the time that I come to Seattle, it's in the evening, for dinner, for theater, for friends, for activities that I do weekly or biweekly.

I'm a volunteer at the aquarium, and sometimes I come over on Edmonds, sometimes I come over on Bainbridge. But I walk on the ferry 90 percent of the time. Very seldom do I drive.

And I also felt as if -- I just had this picture of somebody in a highrise office downtown thinking: Oh, you know, we'll just -- they might be inconvenienced, but it's no big deal. It's a big deal not to have ferries at night during the week. It's a big deal.

And listening to all the people talk about that, I thought: Okay, you have Plan B. You save some money. It's only a \$1.5 billion deficit. But you're not adding the cost of the economic loss to Port Townsend, Port Orchard, Port Angeles, the Olympic Peninsula, Forks, Kingston, Indianola, Poulsbo. And there's numerous other communities. Bremerton. You know, name any town, any city, any development, anybody who works over here, anybody who has family or activities or business on one side and home on the other side.

You better calculate that and put that right in the plan as

well, as part of the cost of Plan B. And then maybe people who will hear it in the Legislature will understand. It's not an inconvenience. It's -- as I said, it's basically a death sentence for the entire western portion of this state.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 28: My name is Andy Peters, from Bainbridge Island. And first off, I would like to say that my mom told me, when you say something, say it nice. So we should be proud. We live in an area where we have one of the safest ferry systems in the world. They are world-reknown for the way it takes care of our passengers. With the exception of a few days ago, of somebody falling overboard or getting off the boat -- I'm not sure what happened, but we never see any accidents on our boats, and we've got a great crew and it's very safe; an excellent system.

With regard to Plan A and Plan B, you've heard enough about that, so I won't go into that any further. Two things that we haven't heard about much. One, Steve Bauer just mentioned, and that was passenger ferries and integrating passenger ferries. And the other thing we haven't heard much about at all is our ferry terminals. So I'd like to point to those two things and how they work together.

I'm a strong supporter of expanding our passenger-ferry service, especially in public/private partnerships, and using our existing terminals, infrastructure to help our intermodal transportation connections and making those facilities available

for our public/private partnerships.

And I want to make sure that those are addressed in any type of new plans that we do, whether it's here, from Edmonds -- Kingston, rather, to Seattle, or from Friday Harbor to Bellingham or Friday Harbor to Anacortes to Sidney, that we look at our public/private partnerships, passenger ferries, and consider the types of partnerships that these private operators and the State can have together using our terminals.

Thanks.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 29: Hi. I just want to pass on a little bit. I'll make it short and sweet, under three minutes. I also am an employee of Washington State Ferries. I love my job. I love my customers. We have great people that go to and from, for whatever reason, whether it's a life-saving situation, for fun, entertainment, or to feed their family.

I'm passing on to you what I'm hearing from my customers, because I do this every day. And I think number one on the list is, they want accountability. That's what I hear the very most. Different sectors of this going on, that going on.

With the economy the way that it is right now, yes, we have to have a forecast for the ferry system. But we also have to look -- I'm putting five years down right now. What's going to happen in the next five years with the way the economy is right now?

We still have to go to work. We still have to entertain our families, enjoy ourselves. But whatever money goes into it, we

need the most bang for the bucks, basically. And that's what I'm passing on to you from my customers. Great people.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 30: My name is Ken Jones, and I am the chairman of the Edmonds FAC. I recognize many of you folks here. I recognize many of you folks, and some of you recognize me, probably, because of the fact that I spent almost 30 years down there as an Edmonds policeman, putting you on boats. I think I probably put about 6 million cars on those boats.

I want you to know that the last two hours I have spent gaining a deep appreciation of your passionate nature about this ferryboat. This is your lifeline, and thank you so very much for taking part of your evening for coming here tonight. On the other side, we don't have anywhere near this kind of turnout, and so I appreciate this.

The other thing that I just want to say is the fact that, having stood out there for almost 30 years in the rain and the wind and the snow and the heat and everything else, I worry about the reservation part. And Ray talked about reservations.

That sounds great. On paper, it sounds great. But if you stand there and you have hundreds of cars per hour coming at you and you're trying to figure out where to put them in the limited amount of real estate that you have there right now -- you know, maybe I'm very narrow-minded, but I can't see how it's going to work. I mean, it's a tough thing.

So anyway, please be thinking about that, everyone. So

thanks for coming tonight.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 31: Judy Osborn. One of the things that we have not talked about tonight -- and it goes back to a good friend of ours in Kingston, Kathleen Sutton. And she had to go across almost weekly to get medical help. And sometimes it was in the evenings, and sometimes it was in the mornings, and sometimes it was in the day. And she said to me one time, "The roughest part is I lose my ability to function. I have to depend on everybody else."

Can you imagine what it would be like for her if she -- you close down the 9 o'clock ferry and she had just gotten out of her chemotherapy? Wouldn't that be a swell thing? How would that make you feel?

And I know a little bit about it, because I have a granddaughter who spent three months at Children's Hospital. And I appreciate all of you commuters, because I was doing that. And then I was sitting on I-5 to go down there. And believe me, that is a chore in itself.

So anything that you can do to make that easier, you should do. I'm tired of paying for Seattle, and I'm tired of Mayor Nickels coming out and saying, "You people over there don't do enough for us. We built you two new stadiums. We're going to build you a new viaduct. We're going to build you a floating bridge. Now it's your turn."

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 32: Hi. I'm Andy Humiston. Hi,

David. Nice to see you again. A lot of my comments I gave you in writing last time you were here, and they still hold true.

Paul Green came to see us when 695 first passed, and he said to us, "I have to eliminate 148 jobs. It's sad but true." And all he could tell us -- I said to him, "How many of those people are getting pink slips, and how many are getting lateral moves?" "Well, nobody is really getting pink slips. They're just jobs we're not going to fill."

And we have seen the administrative levels go higher and higher and higher, up to four floors of highrise downtown office space now. The offices used to be at Coleman Dock. Now they're in an office building.

There's more port captains, there's more managers. There's a lot of people that really don't operate the boats, which, those people we need and they're highly trained and they deserve every bit of money they get. The Coast Guard mandates how much they get paid and how many people are on those boats.

So, you know, the boats, I don't have a problem with. It's the administrative long-range planning. How many plans and pieces of paper? This thing is a sham. You guys should be embarrassed that you put it on paper. You've got enough people in those offices doing the work.

This needs fixing. We've got people here who have to go to work every day. The boats need to be utilitarian. They need to be clean. They need to be on time. They need to meet up with the

Sounder. They need to meet up with Kitsap Transit. Please get here on time.

There are a lot of things that Kingston needs. We don't need fancy boats, but we do need to maintain the level of service that we have. It would be nice if it was more on time, but you can't cut us off. This is our lifeline. That is a highway.

I pay my taxes, I pay my tolls, I pay my fares, I pay my fair share, just like everybody else. Thanks.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 33: Thank you very much. I feel sorry for these guys. I've been there. The boss says you've got to do this, you've got to do that, you've got to be more productive, but he doesn't give you anything to work with. You've got to work it out.

They've been given the mandate by the State Legislature to do this, and they're trying to do something. We don't like it. That's not their problem.

The solution is here in this room. If every one of you and your neighbors write to your legislators, write to the Governor and tell them what our needs are and what we need to get it done and get the thing financed -- these guys can't finance it. They don't have any money themselves. They can't get any more.

It's got to come from the State Legislature, and if we all get busy and get a pen and pencil and start in and do it and do it frequently until you make a change.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 34: I didn't get to finish. I'd

like to follow up. Our legislators want to hear from us. They want to know what we're thinking. And you can go to the Washington State legislative Web site -- I think it's wa.leg.gov, or some combination of those seven (sic) letters -- and find out who -- we have Christine Rolfes. We have Senator Phil Rockefeller, and we have Sherry Appleton. They're all in sync with what we're talking about here tonight.

They sit on transportation committees, and the transportation committees in the Senate and the House are skewed against ferry districts. We have very little representation. We have Mary Margaret Haugen, who is from the San Juan County area, Camano Island, and she chairs the Senate committee on transportation.

She should be included as an information addressee on every communication you send to your legislators, your -- Senator Rockefeller, to Sherry, and to Christine Rolfes. Make sure she finds out -- that she knows about it.

You can go a little deeper into that Web site, and you can get the name of every member of both of those committees and, every once in a while, communicate with them on these issues, because they need to know --

They have a lot of things to think about. They're getting bombarded from all kinds of constituencies all over the state. And some of them don't realize that the person that's waiting out here in line on a Sunday afternoon for four hours to get on the ferryboat is a constituent from Walla Walla, on the other side of

the state, that is wondering how to take care of -- this great weekend is turning out miserable because they're waiting in the ferry line with no bathroom facilities.

We have a horrible congestion issue here on weekends, on Sunday afternoon, and in Kingston. We have a few ways to fix that. We have a big lot over here that I think could be used to hold these people. There could be restrooms there. They could get out of their car. They could relax. They could enjoy some of the economy of Kingston and help us out by spending a few bucks here.

But they certainly don't have to sit out there on the highway. Someday somebody is going to have an epileptic seizure, a heart attack, or something, and they won't be able to contact the right authorities, and there's going to be another problem for the legal department and Washington State Ferries.

Think about -- one of my last jobs, when I worked for the government, was being associated with the Base Realignment and Closure committees. They look at how states take care of the communities where their military bases exist. And if the states aren't taking care of those people in the form of logistics, they close those bases down and take those people, those dollars, to states that will support them.

We have two huge bases on this peninsula and the whole ammunition thing up on the Indian Island. They're very critical. They could be taken away from us within the next couple of years

from a new session of Base Realignment and Closure. It would be devastating to the entire economy of Washington State. Think about it.

PUBLIC SPEAKER NO. 35: It's the hard core that is still around here. I'd like to thank David for having listened to us. But mostly, I'd like to thank you. The comments were all thoughtful and from the heart. And I'd like to reinforce what was said.

I go down to Olympia and testify on cases and, often, I may be the only one in the room, maybe three of us as well. What I heard was people speaking from the heart. And when you go down there, you hear bureaucrats, you hear people making speeches, but you don't hear the humanity. And I think the Senators and the legislators need to hear real people down there, and I encourage you to figure out if you can come down there or pass the word on to your friends.

I'll put something out in a column I write. I'll try to find out what hearings are going to be when. But as I said before, this will probably be decided on the last hour of the last day of the legislative session. So the game has just started.

(The public comment portion of the
hearing concluded at 8:00 p.m.)

