



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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July 28, 2009

Dear Members of the SR 520 Legislative Workgroup:

First, let me apologize that I am not able to join you today. As you know the 81st Brigade just returned to McChord and I wanted to take the opportunity to personally welcome them back to Washington.

But I still want to take a moment to convey my priorities regarding the SR 520 project. This is a vital project, both for our economy and our safety. Over the last 13 years, we have worked together and made huge progress on this project. It has been through the hard work and dedication of the people and leadership in communities on both sides of Lake Washington, as well as the support and direction of the Legislature and the excellent technical work by our Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff. This is work of which we can all be proud. It is now time for us to make the decisions necessary to move this project into construction. As we consider these final decisions necessary to enter a new era in this project, it is important we remember the reasons why we need a new bridge.

The west approach of the floating bridge and the connecting bridges are supported by hollow columns that could implode and collapse in an earthquake. The bridge could fail during a severe windstorm. When winds reach over 50 miles per hour, the drawspan, anchor cables and pontoons could all break or crack – sinking the bridge and severing the economic connections in the region. Crews at WDOT closely monitor the forces of wind and water to keep the bridge in good condition, but there is no question – the 520 Bridge must be replaced.

Each day, 155,000 people cross it in 115,000 vehicles. The traffic is almost equal in each direction – this is not a project for the east or the west side of Lake Washington. This is a project that is critical for the safety and economy of the entire Central Puget Sound region. I know that many of you have already spent several years working on this project. I'm asking you to give a little more time and effort to help accomplish our final milestones: selecting a Westside design and developing a financial plan for building projects along the full 520 corridor.

We need to do this while maintaining the progress and commitments we have made to the many parties who have dedicated their time and energy to the project thus far:



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- We will replace the existing bridge with a six-lane corridor that has the ability to be expanded in the future.
- We will start construction in Grays Harbor in 2010.
- We will construct a new floating bridge that will be open to drivers by 2014.
- With the completion of your work this year, we will strive to complete the entire corridor as close to 2016 as possible.
- We will complete the project within the legislatively-directed amount of \$4.65 billion.

Through your generous support of this project with your time and effort – and with a collaborative approach – we can complete State Route 520 project. We can deliver on the promise of a stronger and safer future for Washington citizens.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor