

WSDOT/KOMO correspondence: Sept. 28 – Nov 1, 2012

Friday, September 28, 2012

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 10:20 AM
To: 'Vedder, Tracy'
Cc: Pierce, Steve
Subject: KOMO Responses from WSDOT re: SR 520 Pontoons

Dear Tracy:

I have consolidated your three email inquiries from 9/27 and included your questions and our responses all in this one email.

Thanks—Suanne.

#1: Thu 9/27/2012 10:38 AM

Good Morning –

Since I don't have direct contact with Julie Meredith – I have to ask you to relay this question to her. We've been told that, in working on the pontoons, WSDOT and Kiewit General are taking a lot of shortcuts because of pressure to make the construction schedule. Can she respond?

Additionally, Suanne, I'm wondering where you are in getting us pictures of the spalling that resulted from the post-tensioning? And I've poured through all the online photo sources I can find on WSDOT and can't find any photos or videos that show the post-tensioning at Aberdeen. I did find some on other WSDOT pontoons but not these – are there any available?

Thanks,

Also I've been told the story is going to air this Sunday night so I'll need Julie's answer by tomorrow morning at the latest.

Thanks again,

Tracy Vedder

WSDOT RESPONSE:

Here is Julie's response to question #1 above:

WSDOT and Kiewit-General are committed to excellence in the pontoons as the foundation for the new SR 520 floating bridge. When some spalling and cracking occurred after post-tensioning the pontoons in May, we announced the issue and explained to the public that repairs would require the float-out to occur later in the summer than the June time-frame we had anticipated. Repairs were completed during May – July, and the pontoons were successfully floated out of the Aberdeen casting basin on July 30.

In June WSDOT convened an expert review panel to analyze the cause of pontoon spalling, review WSDOT's repairs to cycle 1, and to make recommendations for future pontoon construction cycles.

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WSDOT has taken the panel's findings and made changes for cycle 2. We expect that spalling can be avoided and cracking reduced for future construction cycles. We are completely confident that all of the SR 520 bridge pontoons we build will be safe, structurally sound and meet our requirements to last 75 years or more.

#2: Photos of spalling.

I have attached two photos that show the spalling repairs completed in one of the longitudinal pontoons. In your public disclosure request dated 9/17/12 you requested "all still photos or videos" related to the pontoon cracking or spalling. Those records are being gathered through the public disclosure request process, but in the mean time, I do not have any photos of the spalling.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mze6Wb7KQhY&feature=youtu.be>

In the video linked above from June 22, 2012 WSDOT documented the repairs of the spalling and the cracks, as well as the process used to repair any cracks, confirming that WSDOT's contract requires any cracks measuring more than 6/1000 of an inch to be treated with an epoxy injection and then sealed with crystalline waterproofing. Any crack under 6/1000 of an inch is sealed with the crystalline waterproofing as well.

#3: Photos of post-tensioning.

In the attached graphic you will find in photo #3 an example of post-tensioning strands shown extending from the ducts that run the length of the longitudinal pontoons.

#2: Thu 9/27/2012 10:43 AM

One quick follow-up question,

What is the status of repairs to the pontoons in Lake Washington? Specifically the "weeping" into the exterior wall of Pontoon W.

Thanks,

Tracy Vedder

WSDOT RESPONSE:

In our video from August 2012, linked below, WSDOT noted at minute 1:38 that "WSDOT and the contractor are developing repair plans as necessary to meet contract requirements." Also on minute 2:40, we confirm that "The contractor will perform minor repairs to Pontoon W as needed." WSDOT has been transparent with the public and the media that any and all cracks will be repaired to meet contract specifications.

WSDOT and its contractor continue to inspect the pontoons, and will complete repairs as needed to meet contract specifications.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbnkYEeiJgg&list=UUmWr7UYgRp4v_HvRfEgguXg&index=2&feature=plcp

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#3: Thu 9/27/2012 2:37 PM

Hi Guys –

In checking your online video posted on YouTube that has the four videos and the graphic – we have a question about one shot. We’ve had experts tell us what appears at 1:50 into this video is a crack in the concrete. This is inside Pontoon W. Is it?

If so- isn’t that evidence of additional cracks?

Thanks,

Tracy Vedder

WSDOT RESPONSE:

Tracy: The video you note above (and linked below) from August 2012 includes inspection video taken by WSDOT inspectors. Yes—the video was taken from the inside of Pontoon W. We can’t be absolutely certain from this video whether this is a crack or not, and whether it is new or not. As we have stated previously, inspections on the lake are ongoing, and if this is a crack, it will be repaired to the contract specifications.

Again, WSDOT has been transparent that cracking occurred in the end walls of pontoons after post-tensioning in May 2012. WSDOT and its contractor are committed to excellence in all the 520 pontoons, and is taking corrective action to assure that all cracks are repaired to meet contract specifications and that modifications are being implemented for cycle 2 to reduce cracking. WSDOT has also acknowledged on several occasions that cracking is a property of concrete, and our job is to minimize the cracking to the greatest extent possible, and to repair cracks as needed.

Whether this was a crack that was identified in Aberdeen or on Lake Washington, it would be treated the same way. There are 77 pontoons coming onto Lake Washington, and WSDOT will be working with the contractor to continue inspections and repairs as needed to meet contract requirements.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbkYEeiJgg&list=UUmWr7UYgRp4v_HvRfEgguXg&index=2&feature=plcp

Suanne Pelley

SR 520 Program Communications Manager

Office: 206-770-3578

Cell: 206-437-5717

pelleys@wsdot.wa.gov

Attachments to Friday, September 28 email:



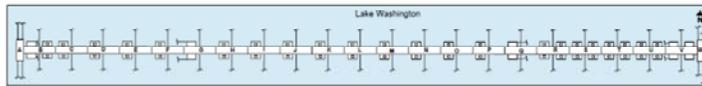
SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program



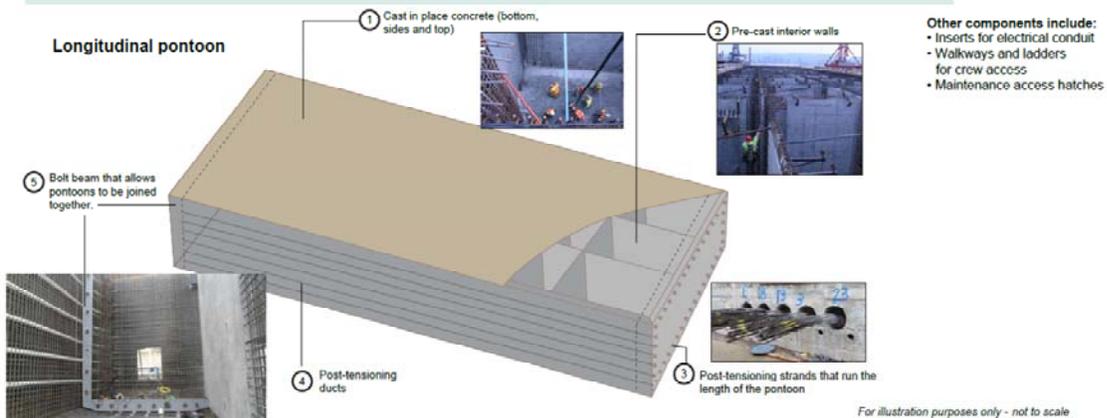
September 2012

SR 520 longitudinal pontoons design components

Final configuration on Lake Washington



Longitudinal pontoon



For illustration purposes only - not to scale

WSDOT/KOMO correspondence: Sept. 28 – Nov 1, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 10:34 AM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: RE: KOMO Responses from WSDOT re: SR 520 Pontoons

Thank you Suanne,

I do have one question for clarification. In the area you've noted as question number 2 below from 9/27/2012, I'm not sure I understand your answer. Have the problems and necessary repairs identified in your Aug. 22, 2012 video actually been completed? Ms. Meredith couldn't give me a clear answer last week and I'm guessing from WSDOT's answer below, "...will complete repairs..." that they have not yet been completed. That is the information I will go with unless I hear otherwise from you.

Thanks again.

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 10:36 AM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: RE: KOMO Responses from WSDOT re: SR 520 Pontoons

And I'm sorry Suanne, but I have to ask again – there is no direct answer to my question regarding shortcuts and pressure to meet the schedule. Is that really WSDOT's answer?

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 11:43 AM
To: 'Vedder, Tracy'
Cc: Pierce, Steve
Subject: RE: KOMO Responses from WSDOT re: SR 520 Pontoons: UPDATED 9/28

Hi Tracy—Again I've combined your two questions into one email, with our responses below. Thanks—Suanne.

Fri 9/28/2012 10:34 AM

Thank you Suanne,

I do have one question for clarification. In the area you've noted as question number 2 below from 9/27/2012, I'm not sure I understand your answer. Have the problems and necessary repairs identified

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in your Aug. 22, 2012 video actually been completed? Ms. Meredith couldn't give me a clear answer last week and I'm guessing from WSDOT's answer below, "...will complete repairs..." that they have not yet been completed. That is the information I will go with unless I hear otherwise from you.

Thanks again.

WSDOT RESPONSE:

At this time repairs have not been completed on pontoon W in Lake Washington. WSDOT and KGM are continuing to develop the plan for repairs. Since the interior condensation is relatively minor, we have time to determine the best repair option and timing. It will likely be similar to the repairs made in Aberdeen, with epoxy injections and/or crystalline water proofing.

Fri 9/28/2012 10:36 AM

And I'm sorry Suanne, but I have to ask again – there is no direct answer to my question regarding shortcuts and pressure to meet the schedule. Is that really WSDOT's answer?

Tracy Vedder

WSDOT RESPONSE:

Tracy: The safety and quality of the new floating bridge is the first priority for both WSDOT and our contractor. We are taking all steps necessary to ensure that this new facility will serve the region for 75 years or more. Making repairs in cycle 1 and making modifications to cycle 2 shows WSDOT's commitment to ensuring that the pontoons are structurally sound. As you may recall, the contract requires an open-to-traffic date of July 2015, with incentives to open earlier. We still have nearly three years of construction ahead of us, with opportunities to gain back some time from the cycle 1 repairs and cycle 2 modifications.

Suane Pelley

SR 520 Program Communications Manager

Office: 206-770-3578

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pelleys@wsdot.wa.gov

Friday, September 28, 2012

From: Pierce, Steve

Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 12:55 PM

To: Vedder, Tracy

Cc: Garza, Sarah (sgarza@komotv.com); Pelley, Suanne (Consultant); Meredith, Julie

Subject: Pontoon story

Tracy: Thanks for letting us know when your story is scheduled to run. I certainly hope the story will be fair, complete and balanced. From this side of the fence, it's often troublesome when "sources" (with who knows what kind of motivations) tell a reporter things – and then stories are pinned heavily on those unnamed sources, leaving government officials "reacting" to the sources.

WSDOT has been and continues to be a transparent agency – an approach we truly believe in as we and our contractor partners continue to deliver \$16.3 billion in transportation improvements from the 2003 and 2005 gas taxes. In preparing to use the world's largest deep-bore tunneling machine, in building the world's longest floating bridge, in vastly improving safety and mobility over I-90 Snoqualmie Pass, among 421 other transportation projects big and small, we confront tremendous opportunities and challenges.

In the case of building the largest pontoons we have ever constructed, we have been transparent with issues that arose during the first cycle of pontoons. We have issued news releases, posted videos, engaged an expert review panel, held media briefings, and made corrections and modifications – in processes, procedures, and construction. Projects like this one are complex, difficult and even messy sometimes. But, as we have told you and the public, the end result – including Cycle 1 pontoons – will be a new floating bridge that will safely serve the public for the next 75 years or more. We all continue to have great pride in the trust the public gives us in helping ensure we have a 21st century transportation system that meets the needs of our economy, our environment and our communities – the new SR 520 bridge included.

I certainly hope we won't view a KOMO story that relies extensively on unnamed sources, that overplays a video of a quickly-corrected leak between internal cells, that unfairly and inaccurately implies that "WSDOT is severely underplaying the severity of problems" with the pontoons on Lake Washington (your words when you questioned Julie Meredith last week), that tells only half the story. As I said, we're counting on you to be fair, complete and balanced.

Steve

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Wednesday, October 24, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 9:51 AM
To: Pierce, Steve
Subject: Questions from KOMO TV

Good Morning Steve,

I am wondering when I could expect a response from WSDOT regarding the questions I sent yesterday for Julie Meredith and Jugesh Kapur?

Additionally a point of clarification - I am trying to find out what designations the project uses for the two supplemental pontoons that were part of the first six coming out of Aberdeen. Can you tell me specifically how they are referenced? i.e. Pontoons V, W, T, U, etc?

Thank you,

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers
206-404-4693

From: Pierce, Steve [<mailto:PierceSt@wsdot.wa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 10:36 AM
To: Vedder, Tracy
Cc: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: RE: Questions from KOMO TV

Tracy: I'm headed out to meetings momentarily. We're working on answers to the questions you sent late yesterday. I would say it's likely you'll get our answers late today or, if not, then early tomorrow morning.

In the meantime, I've asked our 520 team to respond to you directly regarding designations for some of the pontoons.

Steve

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 10:36 AM
To: Pierce, Steve
Subject: RE: Questions from KOMO TV

Thank you.

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

WSDOT/KOMO correspondence: Sept. 28 – Nov 1, 2012

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 2:33 PM
To: Vedder, Tracy
Cc: Pierce, Steve
Subject: RE: Questions from KOMO TV

Hi Tracy:

The supplemental pontoons are named for the longitudinal pontoon to which they will be joined and the location (northwest, southwest, etc.) on that pontoon where joining will occur. The supplemental pontoons constructed in the first cycle of Aberdeen pontoons were VNW and VSW. You can find more information about which pontoons are on the lake and which are currently under construction on our [pontoon tracking Web page](#).

Thanks—Suanne.

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 2:34 PM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: RE: Questions from KOMO TV

Thanks Suanne!

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

On Oct 24, 2012, at 2:52 PM, "Vedder, Tracy" <TracyV@komotv.com> wrote:

Suanne got back to me regarding clarity on pontoon names – do you have any idea yet when I'll have responses to the question I sent yesterday? Also, any more word on whether Sec. Hammond will be available tomorrow afternoon?

Thanks,

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

WSDOT/KOMO correspondence: Sept. 28 – Nov 1, 2012

From: Pierce, Steve
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 3:10 PM
To: Vedder, Tracy
Cc: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: Re: Questions from KOMO TV

It's looking like tomorrow morning for answers to your questions. It's also likely that you'll talk with Paula somewhere between 1:30 and 2:30. We're juggling many things, so those are my best guesses for the moment.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 5:50 PM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: RE: Interview with Paula: 1 p.m. at Sound Transit

I will be there. At what address specifically will we find her?

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant) [<mailto:pelleys@consultant.wsdot.wa.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 5:39 PM
To: Vedder, Tracy
Cc: Pierce, Steve
Subject: Interview with Paula: 1 p.m. at Sound Transit

Hi Tracy—

Steve just called from the road with Paula to confirm that her only time slot is tomorrow at 1 p.m. at Sound Transit. She'll have about 15-20 minutes prior to the Sound Transit Board meeting.

We hope this will work for you—please confirm.

Steve will be with Paula tomorrow, so he'll find you in the Great Hall and you can go from there.

Thanks—Suanne.

Suanne Pelley
SR 520 Program Communications Manager
Office: 206-770-3578
Cell: 206-437-5717
pelleys@wsdot.wa.gov

WSDOT/KOMO correspondence: Sept. 28 – Nov 1, 2012

Thursday, October 25, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 10:06 AM
To: Pierce, Steve; Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: KOMO Questions

Good Morning Steve,

When can we expect your response to our questions sent on Tuesday? We are trying to give WSDOT every opportunity to respond but this is now way beyond our deadline. Please advise when we can expect some answers.

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers
206-404-4693

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:05 AM
To: 'Vedder, Tracy'
Cc: Pierce, Steve
Subject: RE: KOMO Questions: WSDOT Responses

Hi Tracy—Steve has asked me to send the responses below that are from WSDOT collectively.

Thanks—Suanne.

WSDOT RESPONSES TO TRACY VEDDER: 10/25; 11 a.m.

From: "Vedder, Tracy" <TracyV@komotv.com>
Date: October 23, 2012 3:37:39 PM PDT
To: <PierceSt@wsdot.wa.gov>
Cc: "Vedder, Tracy" <TracyV@komotv.com>, "Garza, Sarah" <sgarza@komotv.com>
Subject: Questions from KOMO TV

Hi Steve,
Here are the questions as promised. Please direct them specifically to Jugesh and Julie.

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers
206-404-4693

1. In light of the extensive cracking, both pre and post-tensioning, on all six of the first cycle of pontoons - should those major walls have been torn down and re-cast per contract specifications 2.14.5.2.11?

ANSWER:

Absolutely not. Only one pontoon—Pontoon T—had structural cracks (defined by the contract as cracks in excess of 0.006 inches) beyond the 30 feet threshold mentioned in the contract specification you refer to.

When concrete panels were identified with greater than 30 linear feet of structural crack, the contractor had the right to remove and replace these panels PRIOR to submitting the pontoons to WSDOT. The contractor requested acceptance of these panels without concrete removal and replacement. WSDOT considered the amount of damage that would be done to reinforcing steel and added construction joints that would be introduced as part of this removal and replacement. WSDOT has the responsibility to assess all options and ensure that the ultimate solution produces the best possible final product. This responsibility lies within our HQ Construction Office. In this case, the State Bridge Construction Engineer determined that repairing these structural cracks using the repair procedure in the contract was the best option.

After post-tensioning, we again evaluated the areas affected by the spalling and end wall cracking and developed appropriate repair procedures. These repairs procedures were validated by the expert review panel findings in August.

WSDOT has not yet completed its final acceptance of the pontoons from the contractor since work is not yet complete. We continue to work with our contractor to address the issues that we've identified to date, including shrinkage cracks, end wall cracking, and other items evaluated by the expert review panel.

2. In light of the fact that those walls were NOT torn down, should those pontoons have been rejected by WSDOT?

ANSWER:

Absolutely not. As mentioned in the previous question, prior to post-tensioning there was only one pontoon that exceeded the contract specification for over 30 feet of cracking. WSDOT determined that the appropriate action was to repair the cracks as provided for in the contract to attain the highest quality product, rather than demolish sections of the pontoon, add additional construction joints and risk causing further damage. Any additional modifications to pontoons necessary due to the post-tensioning operations will be evaluated and implemented as needed to maintain a high quality product.

3. With the quality of construction of the first six pontoons out of Aberdeen - can you - as an Engineer, certify that they will give us a bridge with a 75-plus year life expectancy?

ANSWER:

Yes—the 75-year design life will be met. We have designed and specified in the contracts that the pontoons and the floating bridge must meet a 75-year design-life, including all materials that are incorporated into the facility. As noted in other communications, cracks are a normal property of concrete, and were addressed in the contract specifications to ensure that cracks

would be documented in both size and location, and approved repair methods implemented. The expert review panel agreed with the repair procedures specified in the contract. Repairs have and will be made to meet contract specifications, and the 75-year design life will be met.

Every floating bridge in our system requires regular maintenance and repair to ensure the life span of the bridge. We are confident that the repairs that have been made and that are currently in progress for the cracks in the pontoons, along with the regular maintenance program that we employ on every floating bridge will ensure the 75-year life span for this bridge.

WSDOT has not yet completed its final acceptance of the pontoons from the contractor since work is not yet complete. We continue to work with our contractor to address the issues that we've identified on Pontoon W and the longitudinal pontoons.

4. On September 20th, you told us that the only identified leak was the one video'd in Pontoon V, and the moisture on a couple of external walls of Pontoon W. It is clear from the videos and documents we've subsequently received that that is not true as all six pontoons showed evidence of leaks. Why did you and/or WSDOT hide the truth?

ANSWER:

WSDOT strongly disagrees with your conclusion that WSDOT is hiding the truth, and there are many inaccuracies in your question above. Please see the details below.

When you interviewed Julie Meredith on September 20, you asked specifically about whether pontoons on Lake Washington were leaking, and she explained the leak between two interior cells in Pontoon V, as well as the moisture on the end walls of Pontoon W. Julie referenced the videos of those two pontoons and understood your questions to be about the pontoons on the lake that had been discussed, and the video that showed obvious water flowing between two cells. While inspectors define leaks as any dampness or moisture on walls, and document that for future investigations, Julie was addressing the very obvious and specific leak in the video.

Please note that seeing water inside a pontoon in a video does not necessarily mean there is a leak from outside the pontoon. It is incorrect to assume that observing water or dampness in a pontoon indicates a leak or leaking. There are numerous reasons that water might be found in a pontoon, such as: water may be present because it was added as temporary ballast for balancing the pontoon; residual water may be left from concrete curing; missing or mis-aligned plugs for the bolt sleeves may allow water in until they are addressed, or hatch doors may allow moisture in until they are closed. All of those are issues that would be documented in inspections and addressed per contract requirements. This is an expected part of the inspection, repair, and re-inspection process.

Regarding public accountability: WSDOT publicly announced cracking and spalling in the pontoons on May 18—prompting KOMO's Bryan Johnson to visit Aberdeen and run stories on both May 18 and again on June 27 related to the pontoon announcements from WSDOT. We have continued to provide public information about the pontoon repairs in Aberdeen, and have

consistently noted that the contractor will continue to make repairs as needed until all contract requirements are met.

WSDOT has consistently shared news about the pontoons as it has developed—from holding media events, issuing news releases, and providing information on our Web site. WSDOT has been—and continues to be—up front about this issue.

WSDOT provided over 40 hours of inspection videos, as requested by KOMO. The videos detail the painstaking care taken to document the cracks discovered in Aberdeen so that the contractor can make all required repairs to meet the contract requirements. We have provided dozens of hours of video, and need to know exactly what you are referring to when you say that the “all six pontoons showed evidence of leaks” in the videos.

Again: WSDOT has not yet completed its final acceptance of the pontoons from the contractor since work is not yet complete. We continue to work with our contractor to address the issues that we’ve identified to date, including shrinkage cracks, end wall cracking, and other items evaluated by the expert review panel.

5. We understand that every day of delay of producing pontoons out of Aberdeen results in an approximately \$90,000-plus a day net cost to the State for non-production of the pontoons to the FB&L contract. At the 74 day delay noted in the documents that adds up to at least \$6.6 million dollars just for the first cycle of pontoons. That does not count whatever additional costs for repairs - estimated in a May 31st document as preliminarily being over \$2 million dollars. In an August 29th e-mail you stated that WSDOT had already paid out approximately 50% of the contract value. What is, at this time, the projected, all-inclusive budget costs over-runs for the pontoon issues and delays?

ANSWER:

As WSDOT has noted on several occasions, we are entering discussions with contractor Kiewit-General to assess the financial and schedule impacts of the pontoon delay in cycles one and two. These will be difficult discussions as we evaluate the responsibility of WSDOT and our contractor in both design and construction. We do not yet have a cost estimate for the repairs or the schedule impacts. As you note, there will also be discussions with floating bridge contractor Kiewit/General/Manson due to the delay in delivering pontoons to the contractor as specified in the contract.

One important part of WSDOT budgeting includes reserving funds for risk and contingency. The pontoon and floating bridge projects include budget reserves for both risk and contingency as appropriate.

6. Why did WSDOT not reject the first six pontoons due to extensive cracking per the contract Section 2.14.5.2.11, or, at a minimum, reject the most severely damaged panels and cause them to be re-poured as the contract requires? Was the decision made based on the cost of delays?

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ANSWER:

See answers 1 and 2 above.

7. Sources inform KOMO TV that, in light of the extensive cracking and subsequent repairs to the first cycle of six pontoons, that we will not get anywhere near the advertised 75-year life span for this bridge. They point by comparison to the much better quality of the 20 and 30 year old pontoons making up the I-90 bridges, and even the existing 520 bridge pontoons. In light of those quality comparisons, how can you guarantee a 75-year life span to this bridge?

ANSWER:

Yes—the 75-year design life will be met.

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:34 AM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Cc: Pierce, Steve; Vedder, Tracy; Garza, Sarah
Subject: RE: KOMO Questions: WSDOT Responses

Thank you for these responses – a couple of follow up questions and since WSDOT was so late with these initial responses we need answers to these follow-ups with all due haste:

In response to Answer #1) Who specifically; and I am asking for a name of an Engineer of Record or some type of licensing responsibility on this; who specifically is certifying that the first cycle of pontoons out of Aberdeen will give the new 520 bridge its 75-plus year life expectancy. If this is not Jugesh Kapur's answer then whose is it and what is their credential as an Engineer on this project to certify this information?

In response to Answer #4) First – you're right, I asked specifically about whether the pontoons on Lake Washington were leaking – and at that time there were FIVE pontoons on Lake Washington- all have leaks and Ms. Meredith clearly told me that the leak in pontoon V was the only leak you'd identified.

As to the information in your 3rd paragraph response to this question – we listened to the videographer's assessment of what they were saying regarding leaks, as well as internal documents indicating leak repairs to all six of the first cycle of pontoons. You in no way dispute that there are leaks in all six pontoons in your answer – are you now saying they have not all experienced leaks?

Thank you,

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

WSDOT/KOMO correspondence: Sept. 28 – Nov 1, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:38 AM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Cc: Pierce, Steve
Subject: RE: KOMO Questions: WSDOT Responses

Sorry Suanne,

I had another quick follow-up question - regarding answer number five – are you disagreeing with our 8.6 million dollar estimate? And if so – are you really saying that you have no estimate at this time for what the projected costs could be? Isn't that problematic with a multi-hundred million dollar contract?

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 3:08 PM
To: 'Vedder, Tracy'
Cc: Pierce, Steve; Garza, Sarah
Subject: RE: KOMO Questions: WSDOT Responses

Tracy— Steve said that Paula answered most of your questions in the interview, but we want to make sure that you are clear about the possible sources of water in pontoons.

As we explained below, there can be numerous reasons that water might be inside pontoons. Seeing water inside a pontoon in a video does not necessarily mean there is a leak from outside the pontoon. It is incorrect to assume that observing water or dampness in a pontoon indicates a leak or leaking. There are numerous reasons that water might be found in a pontoon, such as: water may be present because it was added as temporary ballast for balancing the pontoon; residual water may be left from concrete curing; missing or mis-aligned plugs for the bolt sleeves may allow water in until they are addressed, or hatch doors may allow moisture in until they are closed. All of those are issues that would be documented in inspections and addressed per contract requirements. This is an expected part of the inspection, repair, and re-inspection process.

Suanne.

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 3:11 PM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: RE: KOMO Questions: WSDOT Responses

Hi Suanne,

Unfortunately this still does not answer our question. Again, is WSDOT 'denying' that there are/or have been leaks in all six of the first cycle of pontoons? Our search of documents and videos indicates otherwise so we want to know **specifically** if WSDOT is saying that is not so.

WSDOT/KOMO correspondence: Sept. 28 – Nov 1, 2012

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 4:52 PM
To: 'Vedder, Tracy'
Cc: Pierce, Steve; 'Garza, Sarah'
Subject: RE: KOMO Questions: WSDOT Responses

Tracy—

Regarding your continued question whether all six pontoons on the lake are leaking, Secretary Hammond answered the question in the interview with you this way:

“Well I don’t know that. I do know that the pontoons on the lake have ballast water in them so for you to say you have an insider that says they’re leaking, whether they are or are not, we haven’t accepted the pontoons and we won’t accept the pontoons until we know they meet the contract specifications.”

Also please see the update to question #1 below in RED.

Suanne.

1. In light of the extensive cracking, both pre and post-tensioning, on all six of the first cycle of pontoons - should those major walls have been torn down and re-cast per contract specifications 2.14.5.2.11?

ANSWER:

Absolutely not. Only one pontoon—Pontoon T—had structural cracks (defined by the contract as cracks in excess of 0.006 inches) beyond the 30 feet threshold mentioned in the contract specification you refer to.

UPDATE: 10/25/12, 4:30 p.m. Today our Aberdeen staff was confirming the information about initial pontoon cracking and realized that the spreadsheet they reviewed yesterday was a photocopy that did not include all of the appropriate cells. When they double-checked this today, they reported that Pontoon U also had more than 30 lineal feet of cracking in its inspection prior to post-tensioning. We wanted to make sure that we corrected the record to show that two pontoons—both T and U—had initial cracking over the 30 feet specification. WSDOT stands by its decision that the repair procedure in the contract was the best option.

When concrete panels were identified with greater than 30 linear feet of structural crack, the contractor had the right to remove and replace these panels PRIOR to submitting the pontoons to WSDOT. The contractor requested acceptance of these panels without concrete removal and replacement. WSDOT considered the amount of damage that would be done to reinforcing steel and added construction joints that would be introduced as part of this removal and replacement. WSDOT has the responsibility to assess all options and ensure that the ultimate solution produces the best possible final product. This responsibility lies within our HQ

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Construction Office. In this case, the State Bridge Construction Engineer determined that repairing these structural cracks using the repair procedure in the contract was the best option.

After post-tensioning, we again evaluated the areas affected by the spalling and end wall cracking and developed appropriate repair procedures. These repairs procedures were validated by the expert review panel findings in August.

WSDOT has not yet completed its final acceptance of the pontoons from the contractor since work is not yet complete. We continue to work with our contractor to address the issues that we've identified to date, including shrinkage cracks, end wall cracking, and other items evaluated by the expert review panel.

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 4:54 PM
To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Cc: Garza, Sarah
Subject: RE: KOMO Questions: WSDOT Responses

Thanks Suanne.

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

Friday, October 26, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 1:25 PM
To: Pierce, Steve; Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Cc: Garza, Sarah; Vedder, Tracy
Subject: Governor's comments

Good Afternoon Steve and Suanne,

Governor Gregoire told me today she is asking for another independent expert review panel to look into the condition of the first six pontoons delivered from Aberdeen. Can you tell me what the expected timeline might be for the panel to be brought in?

Thank you,

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers
206-404-4693

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From: Pierce, Steve [<mailto:PierceSt@wsdot.wa.gov>]
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 3:48 PM
To: Curtis, Cory
Cc: Vedder, Tracy; Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: FW: Governor's comments

Cory: See Tracy Vedder's email below. I'm hoping you'll respond, since she is referencing something the governor said.

Steve

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 3:49 PM
To: Pierce, Steve; Curtis, Cory
Cc: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: RE: Governor's comments

So will this not be coming from WSDOT?

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

From: Curtis, Cory (GOV) [<mailto:Cory.Curtis@GOV.WA.GOV>]
Sent: Friday, October 26, 2012 4:40 PM
To: Vedder, Tracy (TracyV@komotv.com)
Cc: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant); Pierce, Steve
Subject: RE: Governor's comments

Hi Tracy-

The Governor's reference was what WSDOT announced yesterday: "Hammond has also re-convened an expert review panel to conduct additional analysis of pontoon design, repairs and construction management processes." The panel has already begun working on that process.

Thanks-
Cory

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2012 4:10 PM
To: Pierce, Steve; Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: Interview Request

Good Afternoon,

After going through the records released last Friday we would like to set up an interview with the person who is listed on the project drawings – Patrick Clarke. Could we please set the interview for as soon as possible this week?

Thank you,

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers
206-404-4693

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 10:12 AM
To: Pierce, Steve; Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Cc: Garza, Sarah; Gauntt, Holly; Vedder, Tracy
Subject: Interview Request

Good Morning Steve and Suanne,

Following up on my request yesterday – I'm wondering if Patrick Clarke will be available for an interview today. The records we received last Friday raise some serious structural questions about the first set of pontoons and we need to get to the bottom of this quickly. Please advise.

Thanks,

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers
206-404-4693

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 1:55 PM
To: Pierce, Steve; Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Subject: Review Panel & tour

Hello Steve, Suanne,

I haven't heard back from either of you regarding an interview with Patrick Clarke – can you tell me if you're going to make him available and when? Additionally, can you tell me if the new Expert Review Panel is the same as the last Panel or if there are different members? When are they beginning work?

I understand according to the Governor's office that you are going to conduct a media tour of the inside of the pontoons on Lake Washington – when is that happening and which Review Panel member is going to be doing the explanations? We, of course, would like to go along.

Please advise on all.

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers
206-404-4693

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

From: Hayes, Audrey [<mailto:HayesA@wsdot.wa.gov>] **On Behalf Of** Pierce, Steve
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 3:31 PM
To: Vedder, Tracy
Subject: 520 Pontoons

[Steve Pierce asked me to send you this email.](#)

Tracy: Regarding your request to interview Patrick Clarke, we feel it is not appropriate to have employees discussing, in the public forum, issues that are currently under review related to change conditions at the Aberdeen pontoon construction site. It is clear in reading the emails and documents that you have received, that there is disagreement among some employees involved in the pontoon construction project about the quality of the contractor's product. That is part of the review that Secretary Hammond has requested as we investigate the state's and contractor's responsibilities for the problems encountered on the construction of cycle 1 pontoons.

It is critical that contract work delivered and administered be performed by both the contractor and WSDOT under the requirements of the pontoon construction contract and within agency procedures for the intended result of quality products for the taxpayers. Secretary Hammond has asked John Reilly and Associates, chairman of the Expert Review Panel, to review and report on the history of the pontoon design and construction processes and protocols followed to date, including both WSDOT contract administration functions as well as the contractor's means and methods.

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As both Secretary Hammond and Governor Gregoire have discussed with you, we have reconvened the Floating Bridge Expert Review Panel that did some earlier work for us, to include but not be limited to further review of the following details:

- o Review and assess the structural capacity of the pontoons, including changes to the current contract specifications, if needed.
- o Assess the quality of the pontoons that have already been constructed compared to the pontoon construction contract requirements and applicable design and performance criteria.
- o Review and identify methods of crack identification and repair techniques, taking into consideration advances in means, methods and materials.
- o Assess potential maintenance needs of the pontoons in order to ensure long-term effectiveness of the crack repairs.
- o Assess the second cycle of pontoons, including design and construction methods.

We expect to receive recommendations from the panel and from John Reilly by the end of the year.

The panel includes the same members as before. I believe they have had one initial phone meeting so far and that's all I'm aware of at this point.

Regarding a media tour of the pontoons, we have considered this but nothing has been scheduled. This would depend entirely on a number of factors, including construction activities at the site. If we conduct such a tour we will let you know.

Steve Pierce
WSDOT Communications Director
360-705-7076

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 4:40 PM
To: Pierce, Steve
Cc: Vedder, Tracy; Garza, Sarah
Subject: RE: 520 Pontoons

Hello Steve,

Thank you for this response. At the same time, I find it troublesome that when we asked to speak with first, Jugesh Kapur, and now, Patrick Clarke, two people who would presumably know the most about how the pontoons were designed and were to be built, we are told no.

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At any rate, I do have a number of questions for the department related to the most recent group of records we received; we would appreciate answers by tomorrow if possible.

1. According to our records, the “hook bars” that are an integral part of the joints between pontoons were cut short by Kiewit on several of the pontoons. We understand this affects the structural integrity of the joints and will limit the bridge’s ability to withstand a severe storm by as much as 50%. What is WSDOT doing, or requiring Kiewit to do, to compensate for this “structural issue”?
2. I have two engineering experts who now say the problems with the first six pontoons are so bad that, even with repairs, WSDOT should reject them. Why have you not rejected them and asked the contractor to start over?

Tracy Vedder
Investigative Reporter
KOMO TV Problem Solvers

Thursday, November 01, 2012

From: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)
Sent: Thursday, November 01, 2012 3:07 PM
To: 'Vedder, Tracy'
Cc: Pierce, Steve; 'Garza, Sarah'
Subject: 520 Pontoons

Tracy—Steve is out of the office this afternoon and requested that I send this on to you.
Thanks—Suanne.

Tracy: Regarding your questions:

1. We are working with the contractor to ensure the appropriate analyses are performed. If retrofitting is required to strengthen these areas, the appropriate work will be done. At the end of the continuing work on the pontoons from Cycle 1, we will have a product that is safe and that meets contract specifications.
2. We have been transparent about the fact that some of Cycle 1 pontoons from Aberdeen have encountered problems of concrete spalling, which was successfully repaired, and cracking on some of the walls. We continue to work with the contractor to address any and all of the issues, and we will make necessary repairs or alterations that will ensure that the pontoons meet contract and design-life requirements. And, as we’ve noted previously, we have not yet accepted these pontoons.

Finally, as I noted yesterday, the Expert Review Panel has been re-engaged to do this continuing work:

- Review and assess the structural capacity of the pontoons, including changes to the current contract specifications, if needed.
- Assess the quality of the pontoons that have already been constructed compared to the pontoon construction contract requirements and applicable design and performance criteria.
- Review and identify methods of crack identification and repair techniques, taking into consideration advances in means, methods and materials.

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- Assess potential maintenance needs of the pontoons in order to ensure long-term effectiveness of the crack repairs.
- Assess the second cycle of pontoons, including design and construction methods.

Steve

From: Vedder, Tracy [<mailto:TracyV@komotv.com>]

Sent: Thursday, November 01, 2012 4:27 PM

To: Pelley, Suanne (Consultant)

Subject: RE: 520 Pontoons

Thank you Suanne.

Tracy Vedder

Investigative Reporter

KOMO TV Problem Solvers