

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Philip Morley, County Administrator

FROM: Leslie Locke, Deputy Clerk of the Board

DATE: October 8, 2012

SUBJECT: Joint Letter of Support from Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson and Mason for Restoration of Ferry Funding in Proposed Budget; Washington State Ferries, Assistant Secretary David Moseley

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Joint Letter of Support from Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson and Mason for Restoration of Ferry Funding in Proposed Budget; Washington State Ferries, Assistant Secretary David Moseley


ANALYSIS:

Laura Melrose, Liaison for Kitsap County Commissioner Charlotte Garrido has requested that Jefferson County join in signing a letter of support along with Kitsap, Clallam and Mason Counties.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Joint Letter of Support from Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson and Mason for Restoration of Ferry Funding in Proposed Budget; Washington State Ferries, Assistant Secretary David Moseley.

REVIEWED BY:


Philip Morley, County Administrator

10/4/12
Date



October 3, 2012

Washington State Ferries
Assistant Secretary David Moseley
2901 Third Avenue
Suite 500, Mail Stop: TB-32
Seattle, WA 98121-3014

Dear David:

RE: Washington State Ferries' Draft Budget and Service Cuts

The Board of County Commissioners of Kitsap, Jefferson, Clallam and Mason Counties are writing to strongly request a restoration of ferry funding in your proposed budget. All levels of government are facing difficult budget times due to the national recession. Your proposed budget and service cuts would have dramatic reductions that would irreversibly damage the quality of life and economic recovery for our counties' residents and severely impact the entire Puget Sound Region. It is critical that long range service levels are not held hostage on an annual basis.

With the bulk of new jobs projected to be created in the East Puget Sound, it is clear that reductions in service levels will dramatically force more commuters onto our region's highways. The escalation in ferry fares over recent years has had an impact on reducing ridership. Dramatic pullback in service levels will have an even stronger impact.

The funding gap faced by Washington State Ferries (WSF) is primarily the result of the decade old roll back of Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) revenue that has not been addressed by the legislature. Much of the transportation funding eroded by MVET has been addressed through different revenue measures. While the State has blessed an over \$4 billion tunnel to replace the State Highway 99's Alaska Way Viaduct, the leadership to invest in a WSF system that serves as the marine highways for the entire region has been ignored. In this legislative session, the State will likely examine several bills that seek to create a regional taxing mechanism for programs such as the Puget Sound Partnership. Yet, while Kitsap and other Puget Sound Counties will be sought to support these endeavors, our regional transportation network based on WSF will be eroded.

We cannot support State efforts to tax us for new programs, while basic needs of our communities are ignored. A reexamination of State priorities is desperately needed.

Our counties look forward to working with WSF to adopt a long-range funding plan that truly meets the needs of the Puget Sound region.

Sincerely,

Robert Gelder
Commissioner
Kitsap County

Charlotte Garrido
Commissioner
Kitsap County

Josh Brown
Commissioner
Kitsap County

Commissioner
Mason County

Commissioner
Mason County

Commissioner
Mason County

Commissioner
Jefferson County

Commissioner
Jefferson County

Commissioner
Jefferson County

Commissioner
Clallam County

Commissioner
Clallam County

Commissioner
Clallam County