



Washington State Legislature

September 18, 2006

Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor
State of Washington
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

We would first like to thank you for the attention and leadership you have provided in assisting the City of Seattle and the Puget Sound Region take action on our neglected transportation infrastructure. Your leadership is greatly appreciated.

We are writing you now to affirm our support for reclaiming Seattle's waterfront by constructing a cut-and-cover tunnel to replace the unsafe Alaskan Way Viaduct (AWV). We also want to express our opposition to a new, aerial freeway: to tear down the existing Viaduct, which is a real blight, only to rebuild it, would permanently scar the face of one of the world's most beautiful cities.

During the 2006 session, you helped the Legislature enact a law requiring the creation of an Expert Review Panel to review the Alaskan Way Viaduct and SR 520 projects. As you know, the Expert Review Panel consisted of highly regarded national and international leaders in transportation mega-project management. This reputable panel told us in its report that the funding plan for the tunnel is fundamentally sound and achievable. Furthermore, the report indicated that WSDOT and SDOT have advanced the plans for viaduct replacement in terms of construction and mitigation well beyond what most cities have done at this point in the planning-cycle of a transportation mega-project.

The report is clear that the plan proposed by the State and the City for the tunnel -- from cost to construction to traffic mitigation -- is excellent and is ready for implementation. The report states, "...additional deliberation of the merits of various options would be counterproductive" and that the "information needed is in hand to make a decision and to move those public works projects forward."

Furthermore, the Expert Review Panel reported that "...the basis of WSDOT's cost estimates is generally sound," and that "cost impacts due to inflation can be mitigated by accelerating project implementation with early action items."

The Expert Review Panel's report explicitly states what we already know, that delay is our worst enemy. The Panel's work should clear the way to move forward with a cut-and-cover tunnel without further distractions.

Nearly two years ago, the Seattle City Council voted 7-1 to support a cut-and-cover tunnel as the preferred alternative – which is the same preferred tunnel designated by the WSDOT. That early decision by the Council should be supported. A tunnel allows us to tear down the ugly viaduct that divides downtown and the waterfront. The cut-and-cover tunnel allows us to create open space for families, workers and tourists to enjoy the waterfront of our beloved Puget Sound. It avoids the construction of an even larger double-decker freeway that would be wider and noisier than the present structure. Looking at aerial pictures of downtown Seattle and the Viaduct, it is amazing that we could even be considering rebuilding such a structure that rips through the heart of what should be the centerpiece of the city and the region.

In terms of economic development, only the tunnel provides an offsetting tax benefit to the citizens of Seattle and the State of Washington. A recent economic impact study found that, while there is an approximate construction cost differential of \$1 billion between a tunnel and an elevated highway, a tunnel creates new economic activity along the waterfront and tax revenue that helps offset that differential. Among the benefits identified in the study are:

- \$1 to \$2 billion in new taxable property development.
- \$200 million in one-time tax revenue from a Local Improvement District.
- \$32 to \$60 million in increased ongoing annual tax revenue.
- \$160 to \$325 million in new annual tourism spending.

Seattle has already made the mistake once of cutting off its front porch; we believe we should not repeat this mistake. Seattle's waterfront should be for people and open space, not highways and cars. Moving forward today on the cut-and-cover tunnel will do just that. We have the opportunity of a lifetime in replacing the viaduct with a cut-and-cover tunnel. We owe it to future generations to do the right thing.

We all would be very pleased to meet with you to discuss our recommendation and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Yours truly,



Senator Ken Jacobsen
46th Legislative District



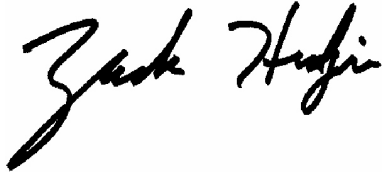
Senator Adam Kline
37th Legislative District



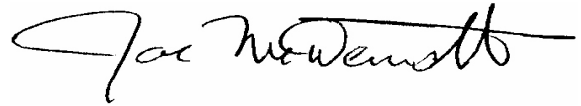
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