

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

REGULAR AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Mark McCauley, County Administrator

FROM: Heidi Eisenhour, Commissioner District 2

DATE: May 1, 2023

RE: LETTER of APPRECIATION re: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) re: Hood Canal Bridge Construction Schedule

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

As stated in our letter, Jefferson County and the entire North Olympic Peninsula, are dependent on the Hood Canal Bridge (HCB) for the daily flow of commerce and emergency services. We also appreciate the need for the Center Lock Rehabilitation, and the need to do the work in the summer. We are writing to share our appreciation for WSDOT hearing the concerns of our community and changing their bridge work schedule. In the letter we are also sharing a couple of additional issues with service changes and bridges closures this summer.

ANALYSIS:

Along with the City of Port Townsend and other local partners, the Board of Commissioners has been sharing our concerns about the impact of the proposed HCB closures on our local economy at the busiest time of the year in our community. We sincerely appreciate WSDOT's willingness to engage with the impacted local communities and amend their plans but we still have some concerns about support for our emergency responders to deal with the impacts of this new closure plan. Finally, just this week we learned about WSDOT's plans to close the Bainbridge Island Ferry run to vehicular traffic the week of September 7 – 13 – which includes the weekend of the Wooden Boat Festival.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Commissioners approve and sign the letter of appreciation.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

4/28/23
Date



Board of County Commissioners
1820 Jefferson Street
PO Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Kate Dean, District 1 Heidi Eisenhour, District 2 Greg Brotherton, District 3

May 1, 2023

Secretary Roger Millar
Washington State Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 47300
Olympia, WA 98504-7300

Steve Roark, Olympic Region Administrator
Washington State Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 47440
Tumwater, WA 98504-7440

Secretary Millar and Mr. Roark,

As you know, in Jefferson County and the entire North Olympic Peninsula, we are dependent on the Hood Canal Bridge (HCB) for the daily flow of commerce and emergency services. We appreciate the need for the Center Lock Rehabilitation, and the need to do the work in the summer. We also appreciate the complex nature of this project and appreciate WSDOT's willingness to engage with the impacted local communities.

We are writing today to express our appreciation for you and your team hearing our concerns about this project and distributing the impact away from concentrated weekend closures in the heart of our busy season. The new plan also provides a level of clarity about the project that allows for our community to plan and prepare.

That said, our emergency responders are still scrambling to mitigate the updated impacts of the project and develop a safety net of response to get our residents off the peninsula when needed. As you know, this can be a life or death issue. For example, East Jefferson Fire and Rescue (EJFR) completes 60-70 medical transfers on summer weekends. We ask for support of additional emergency response mitigations estimated by EJFR.

Finally, we just learned about plans to close the Bainbridge Ferry for vehicle traffic from September 7th to 13th. This happens to coincide with the weekend of our beloved the Wooden Boat Festival. **We would ask that you consider moving this disruption of service back a week.** All events, including WBF, are recovering from the impacts of the pandemic. This closure of service will impact our community greatly on this weekend.

Thank you for updating your plans! We appreciate the attention to the Hood Canal Bridge, and to our concerns about impact to the communities of the North Olympic Peninsula.

Sincerely,

Greg Brotherton

Kate Dean

Heidi Eisenhour

C: Governor Jay Inslee, State of Washington
Senator Kevin Van De Wege, 24th Legislative District
Representative Mike Chapman, 24th Legislative District
Representative Steve Tharinger, 24th Legislative District