



# Skagit County Board of Commissioners

Ron Wesen, First District

Peter Browning, Second District

Lisa Janicki, Third District

April 14, 2023

Senator Liz Lovelett  
213 John A. Cherberg Building  
PO Box 40440  
Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Debra Lekanoff  
422 John L. O'Brien Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504

Representative Alex Ramel  
434 A Legislative Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504

**RE: Washington State Ferries Vessel Replacements Necessary to Resume International Ferry Service between Anacortes, WA and Sidney, British Columbia**

Dear Senator Lovelett, Representative Lekanoff, and Representative Ramel:

We are writing today in support of the City of Anacortes' request that the legislature prioritize the resumption of international ferry service between Anacortes and Sidney, British Columbia.

Not having this international run has resulted in significant fiscal impacts to Skagit County and the surrounding region. The discontinuation of the international service has only exacerbated the struggles faced by our residents and small businesses impacted by widespread workforce shortages and inflation.

As the City of Anacortes notes in their April 11<sup>th</sup> letter, we understand that Washington State Ferries' (WSF) vessels assigned to the international route must meet SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) regulations needed for international travel. We strongly urge that the legislature take a proactive stance on planning for vessel replacement, and that these replacements include the design and build of two SOLAS vessels.

Like Anacortes, we are also concerned that the reopening of the international route has been prioritized last on WSF's [Route Prioritization Plan](#). We understand that WSF receives direction from the legislature; therefore, we are imploring you to please reconsider the importance of reestablishing this route sooner than later.

To ensure that the international route is reopened, we support Anacortes' request that a minimum of two of WSF's planned replacement vessels be built to meet SOLAS standards allowing them to sail internationally.

We also believe SB 5760/HB 1846, which addresses vessel procurement for the WA State Ferries, could positively affect service restoration of the Anacortes/Sidney BC ferry route. This change in procurement processes could help to return robustness to the ferry fleet by shortening the window of time necessary for the fleet to be updated.

Thank you for continuing to support the needs of Skagit County during the final days of this legislative session. Your consideration of this matter would mean so much to our community, and to those who wish to come visit our rich and diverse cities, towns, and country-side.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ron Wesen, Chair

  
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Lisa Janicki, Commissioner

  
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Peter Browning, Commissioner

Cc: John Vezina, Washington State Ferries  
Mayor Matt Miller, City of Anacortes  
Anacortes American  
Anacortes City Council  
Port of Anacortes  
Skagit County Ferry Advisory Committee  
Samish Indian Nation  
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community