

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
March 22 & 23, 2011**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 11 a.m., on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

**MINUTES APPROVAL/ADOPTION**

*It was moved by Commissioner Ford to approve the November 15, 2010 Verbatim Ferry Fare Final Public Hearing as amended. It was moved by Commissioner O’Neal to approve the January 25, 2011 Verbatim Minutes from the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Photo Toll Rates Final Public Hearing as amended. It was moved by Commissioner Ford to approve the February 15 & 16, 2011 Commission Meeting minutes as amended. The motions passed unanimously.*

**COMMISSION RESPONSE TO PETITION FOR ADOPTION, AMENDMENT, OR REPEAL RE: WSR 11-04-007 AND WSR 11-04-070**

*It was moved by Commissioner Moser and seconded by Commissioner Ford that the Commission deny the petitions from Mr. Randy Boss and use the Draft Response prepared by the staff and the Assistant Attorney General to respond to the request to amend or repeal WSR 11-04-007 and WSR 11-04-070. The motion passed unanimously.*

**COMMISSION BUSINESS**

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, provided an overview of the proposed House Transportation budget.

**RENAMING THE SR 532 BRIDGE THE CAMANO GATEWAY BRIDGE**

Senator Haugen addressed the Commission and asked that the new SR 532 Bridge connecting Camano Island to the mainland be named the “Camano Gateway Bridge.”

*It was moved by Commissioner O’Neal and seconded by Commissioner Cowan to adopt Resolution 701 renaming the SR 532 Bridge, known as the Mark Clark Bridge, the “Camano Gateway Bridge.” The motion passed unanimously.*

[Resolution 701](#)

Action/Follow-up: None

**OVERVIEW OF WASHINGTON STATE FERRY UNIONS**

Representatives from five unions representing ferry workers explained the job duties and requirements for specific types of work done by WSF employees. Masters, Mates, and Pilots are required to have First Aid and CPR, Advanced Firefighting and pass maritime training coursework.

Also, a first-class pilot's license is required to be a mate. Average wait from Mate to Master is 12 years. About 200 of 1600 WSF employees are licensed as officers.

Alex Jecha, Marine Engineers, explained they are responsible for the propulsion systems. Coast Guard licenses are required as is additional safety training.

Commissioners asked if the compensation levels for WSF are comparable to people working in the commercial maritime industries, such as Foss or Tote. The market at WSF is slightly below par for the commercial industry; the tradeoff benefit is the ability to go home each night. An engineer doing equivalent work for SeaLand works 5 months a year for \$85,000; that is about the base pay for the WSF engineer. Overtime is about 7-8% at WSF; much less than at BC Ferries.

Jay Udelhart, Inland Boatmen's Union, represents terminal and deck workers. To become an able-bodied seaman requires acquisition of about \$3000 worth of licenses, in addition to minimum time on vessels.

Marty Yellam, from the WSF Eagle Harbor crew, said that when he started workers would migrate to Eagle Harbor from Todd and other shipyards. Recently, as shipbuilding and repair has declined, tradesmen have left Eagle Harbor for the building trades. Eight different trades are represented among the Eagle Harbor workforce.

Tim Sappel, explained that a year ago ferries' labor arbitration changed from "Baseball Approach" to "Split-the-baby Approach."

Action/Follow-up: None.

### **WASHINGTON STATE TRUCK FREIGHT PERFORMANCE MEASURE PROGRAM**

Barb Ivanov, Co-Director, Freight Systems Division, WSDOT, explained that the Department, with support from the Washington Trucking Association, initiated the first state truck performance measure program in the U.S. in 2007. In 2010 the Legislature appropriated additional funding to expand the program to major truck corridors statewide. This program resulted in identifying the most severe truck bottlenecks in the Central Puget Sound region. She provided an overview of specific routes.

[Washington State Truck Performance Measure Report](#)

Action/Follow-up: None.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE WASHINGTON STATE FREIGHT MOBILITY PLAN – DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK**

Barb Ivanov, Co-Director, Freight Systems Division, WSDOT, explained how the new Freight Mobility Plan will build in the themes, strategic drivers and policy recommendations in WTP 2030. The plan also will build on WSDOT modal plans (such as the freight rail plan) and develop freight transportation strategies to support three objectives:

- Livable urban communities
- Global Gateway
- Made in Washington

A technical team will focus on each of the three objectives.

Commissioners asked how will this plan coordinate with FMSIB and CRAB freight mobility work.

[Freight Mobility Plan](#)  
[Draft Scope of Work](#)  
[Mobility Plan Schedule](#)

Action/Follow-up: None.

## **WSDOT RAIL PROGRAM UPDATE**

Scott Witt, Director, State Rail Office, WSDOT, told the Commission that Amtrak Cascades ridership is up by 10 percent in 2010. The Seattle-Portland segment carried over 590,000 passengers. Cascades farebox recovery is now at 72%, up from 46% in 2008 and 54% in 2009.

So far, \$590 million is obligated for improvements on the Seattle-Portland route. Another \$192 million has been awarded but not yet obligated. Construction of true high speed track costs about \$50 million a mile.

The Federal Railroad Administration has never seen this level of funding. It is transitioning from a regulatory and safety organization to project delivery and management. FRA is negotiating complex agreements with multiple parties.

There is a need to improve service reliability on Amtrak Cascades. Weather has created many landslides that disrupt service for Amtrak and Sounder:

- In 2009, six mudslides disrupted 44 Amtrak trains
- In 2010, 12 mudslide events disrupted Amtrak trains
- In 2011, 11 events so far, 110 disruptions.
- \$10 million is provided to do environmental preliminary engineering in the entire corridor

The number of disruptions has raised awareness of the drawbacks of alternative service with buses. Existing laws prevent Amtrak from using Sound Transit or other public buses.

For freight, \$5 million has been allocated to the Freight Rail Investment Bank program and \$2.75 million for the Freight Rail Assistance program.

[Rail Program Update](#)

Action/Follow-up: None.

## **INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS – WIRELESS VEHICLE DETECTION**

Steve Norris, Vice President of Sensys Networks and Ray Schreiber, Director of Marketing, described an integrated approach to regional transportation strategies for the Puget Sound. Sensys has 150 customers in 40 states.

Applications for the device include:

- Signal actuation
- Replacing or repairing inductive loops with wireless inductive loops
- Ramp metering
- Count stations
- Arterial travel time
- Vehicle classification

The units cost about \$300.

### [Wireless Vehicle Detection](#)

Action/Follow-up: None.

## **STORMWATER PERMIT COMPLIANCE**

Megan White, Director, Environmental Services, and Chris Christopher, Director, Maintenance & Operations, WSDOT, talked about the stormwater permit requirements faced by WSDOT. About 40 - 50% of the lane miles on state highways from south of Olympia to the Canadian border have stormwater management systems. Over the last 10-15 years, WSDOT has spent a total of \$200 - \$500 million on stormwater. WSDOT estimates \$10 million a biennium to maintain existing stormwater systems.

In watersheds where pollution loading limits (TMDLs) have been set, the challenge of stormwater management is even more difficult. Under the new permit, WSDOT is increasing testing from six sites currently to 20 sites statewide; increasing from 800 to 46,000 samples per year.

### [Stormwater Permit Compliance](#) [Improving Stormwater Management](#)

Action/Follow-up: None.

## **MARCH TRANSPORTATION REVENUE FORECAST**

Doug Vaughn, Director, Budget & Financial Analysis and Lizbeth Martin-Mahar, Assistant Director, Economic Analysis, WSDOT provided an update on the quarterly transportation revenue forecast. Actual fuel consumption came in slightly under the November-February forecast. Total fuel collections are down \$2.4 million (0.6%) from the November forecast. In the current biennium gas tax revenue is projected down by \$3.5 million and diesel tax revenue is projected down by \$1.2 million.

Action/Follow-up: None.

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

The Commission directed staff to consult with tribal governments on a Centennial Accord Plan. It also released for public comment a proposed revision to the Ferry Naming Policy by removing the provision that the name should be “easy to pronounce.”

## **TOLLING UPDATE**

Craig Stone, Director, Tolling Office, and Jennifer Ziegler, Director, Government Relations and Communications, Tolling Office, WSDOT, talked about implementation of the Statewide Customer Service Center (CSC), which opened mid-February and changeover of the tolling operations to ETC, the new tolling contractor. All of the existing Good-to-Go accounts were successfully moved from TransCore to ETC. The ETC CSC was not prepared for the surge in demand for transponders and accounts. Mr. Dye said that ETC's performance has been very disappointing.

WSDOT had a goal of issuing 100,000 transponders for SR 520. So far, 41,000 new accounts have been set up and 56,000 transponders sold. He also noted that WSDOT has concluded that the ETC testing regimen was inadequate, therefore WSDOT has now delayed SR 520 tolling until ETC runs tests on 10,000 system operations. Instead of an April 9 start, tolling will not begin until May or June.

The TransCore TNB transponder readers cannot read the new transponder being sold. WSDOT is working with TransCore to get new readers installed and change the software that transmits the information. (This is reflecting the battle within the electronic tolling business over Proprietary vs. Open Source technology.) In the meantime, WSDOT will rely on photo tolling on TNB to capture revenue from non-TransCore transponders.

Mr. Dye also stressed that WSDOT is very sensitive to increased TNB expenditures that result from opening of other facilities and system uniformity.

Jim Pasin, from the TNB CAC, suggested that the TransCore transponder continue to be sold to alleviate revenue loss from non-readable transponders. Craig Stone said that a reported \$600,000 loss over 12 months is a "worst-case" estimate of leakage.

Action/Follow-up: Schedule regular meetings of Commission Toll Team with WSDOT leadership.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paul Locke testified that there is too much debt. He doesn't see any way for WSF to get out of its problems without cutting three routes that he previously has suggested.

## **COLUMBIA RIVER CROSSING PROJECT UPDATE AND BI-STATE TOLLING REVIEW**

Don Wagner, CRC Project Director, WSDOT, provided an update of the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project. The Governors of Washington and Oregon decided to scrap the previous design and directed the two transportation Departments to select a new design in March 2011. Problems the CRC will solve:

- Congestion
- High crash rate
- Limited transit options
- Freight paralysis
- Lack of pedestrian-bicycle facilities
- Seismic vulnerabilities

WSDOT is still anticipating a 2019 completion, but a slower start in 2013. If the deck truss design recommended by the two DOTs is selected, the FEIS may be complete in June 2011. Choosing one of the other two designs would delay FEIS by 12-14 months.

A total of \$117 million has already been spent on the project, including Oregon and federal dollars. WSDOT needs \$50 million in the 2011-13 budget to continue work.

The CRC Tolling Study evaluated 10 tolling scenarios and estimated \$940 million to \$3.36 billion available from tolls. Jennifer Ziegler has been working on governance structures; within the next month, a workgroup including a Commissioner from each state.

[Columbia River Crossing Update](#)

[WSDOT News Release](#)

[CRC Key Findings and Recommendation Related to Bridge Type](#)

Action/Follow-up: Convene a joint meeting of Oregon and Washington Commissions.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Secretary Hammond shared that both the Senate and House budgets make preservation a high priority; overall, the two budgets are quite similar. Ferries funding and service changes are one area of difference.

WSDOT is expecting up to a 20% reduction in federal funds for this biennium. Its biggest concern on the legislative policy front is getting authorization to begin I-405 HOT Lanes.

There is broad recognition that there is not support for a revenue package in 2011; there is a desire to move ahead in 2012. The concern is how to keep the size of the package small enough to have voter support.

Action/Follow-up: None.

### **WSF UPDATE**

Jean Baker, Deputy Chief, WSF Administration & Finance, WSDOT explained that:

WSF is looking at ways to mitigate high fuel costs.

- Distributor hedging strategy is the best hedging option because of ease of implementation, no start-up costs, low ongoing costs, low risk and a good fit with current budget policies and schedule.
- There are fuel saving techniques including slower travel, reducing runs, develop alternative tie-up method, and improve loading and unloading times.
- Fuel surcharge implementation on a quarterly basis and credit given for better-than-expected prices.

George Capacci, Deputy Chief, WSF Ferries Construction, WSDOT, shared that vessel construction continues with the Salish expected to enter service in Summer 2011 and the Kennewick to be delivered in October-November 2011. The three-vessel procurement appears to be slightly under budget.

The 144-car vessel is being designed. The Evergreen State class is the oldest class. By the delivery time of any 144-car vessel, all of the Evergreen State class vessels will be 60+ years of age. BC Ferries also might be interested in joining Washington State in purchasing some 144-car ferries.

WSF on-time performance has improved from 93% to 94% from 2009 to 2010. On time performance is impacted by:

- Tightness of the schedule
- Emergency medical evacuations
- Limitations of shore side facilities
- Periodic incidents of stalled vehicles
- Lack of a consistent cut-off time for loading
- Traffic volumes

The labor agreements recently negotiated generate close to \$10 million in savings. Turn-over at WSF is so low that WSF did no seasonal recruiting for the coming year.

[Update Report on Fuel Cost Mitigation Plan](#)

[New Vessel Construction Update](#)

[On-Time Performance Report for Arrivals and Departures](#)

[On-Time Performance Reporting](#)

[Overview of Recent Union Agreement and Savings](#)

Action/Follow-up: None.

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

The Commission voted unanimously to eliminate mailing of minutes and agendas unless an individual indicates it would be a hardship to access them electronically.

The Chair also asked that the Commission consider eliminating verbatim minutes for fare and toll-setting.

The Commission removed the April 20 meeting from its schedule. In April, there will be a Local Meeting at Olympia City Hall on April 19, with a tour on the previous afternoon.

The Commission has received a request for an adjudicative appeal from Randy Boss regarding the request to amend or repeal WSR 11-04-007 and WSR 11-04-070. The Executive Director indicated she will deny the request.

Action/Follow-up: Act to eliminate mailing of minutes and agendas. Seek advice from Asst. Attorney General as to whether verbatim minutes are required for fare and toll-setting actions.

# TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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PHILIP A. PARKER, Chair

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DICK FORD, Vice-Chair

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TOM COWAN, Member

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DAN O'NEAL, Member

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CAROL MOSER, Member

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VACANT, Member

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LATISHA HILL, Member

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TERESA BERNTSEN, Ex-Officio Member  
Governor's Office

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PAULA HAMMOND, Ex-Officio Member  
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

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REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

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DATE OF APPROVAL