

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor

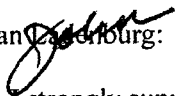


STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 753-6780 • www.governor.wa.gov

July 13, 2006

The Honorable John Ladenburg
Chairman
Sound Transit Board
401 South Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Chairman Ladenburg:

As Governor, I strongly support the long-term vision and commitment to operation of high capacity transit in the I-90 corridor. Sound Transit's preference in the mode question is important and will undoubtedly carry great weight in the overall transportation planning process and with other decision-makers on the I-90 corridor, including the state of Washington.

There are, however, other steps that are part of the design and construction process. These include, for example, the preparation of the project-specific Environmental Impact Statement. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will be a co-lead agency in the preparation of that document analyzing the impacts of a major operational change on a critical facility of the state highway system. WSDOT should not give the appearance of having pre-judged the issues that will arise in the preparation of that document. This is especially true in light of the congestion and impact analysis already performed by WSDOT that will most likely require further refinement and mitigation analysis in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Therefore, I have asked Secretary MacDonald not to participate in today's vote on Sound Transit's preferred choice of mode for high capacity transit in the center lanes of the I-90 corridor across Lake Washington.

I want to emphasize that the decision not to participate is based on the need to observe the overall responsibilities borne by WSDOT and the state in planning and implementation process. I am expressing no preference with respect to mode choice. I also accept and support the state's previous commitment, consistent with the 1976 I-90 Memorandum of Agreement as amended in 2004, to dedicate the center roadway to light rail or light rail convertible bus rapid transit.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize some broader transportation principles. Sound Transit was formed because visionary leaders knew that a strong regional transit system was essential to an effective transportation system for Central Puget Sound. The Sound Transit Phase 2 must outline next steps in moving toward that vision and join it with citizens' broader visions of the region's future transportation system. Solutions should: recognize that all facilities and systems must serve integrated transportation purposes; acknowledge the opportunities presented by emerging technologies; meet citizens' concerns for cost-effectiveness and efficient use of scarce resources; and both serve and help shape the transportation needs of the region and its local communities, 20, 30 and even 50 years in the future



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I appreciate Sound Transit's hard work in developing a transit package for the voters to consider in 2007, and look forward to working with you to address the transportation issues of the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris".

Chris Gregoire
Governor