

Letter sent to various officials at U.S. Dept. of Transportation and Washington State Dept. of Transportation

August 12, 2011

Subject: Sound Transit Final EIS I-90 Bridge

Dear

I am writing to express the concerns of the 1,000 members of the Washington Trucking Associations with the Sound Transit Final EIS I-90 East Link project. In particular the assertion in 3.8.3.1 (Impacts During Operation Freight on Regional Highways) which states that the East Link project when completed will have a beneficial impact on travel time for trucks across the Bridge.

This assumption appears to be based on Sound Transit's projected light rail ridership which claims to reduce single occupant vehicles, thereby allowing trucks to move more freely. Unfortunately, Sound Transit has a long history of over estimating projected ridership. As an example, the Seattle downtown to SeaTac Airport light rail, once completed, carried 50% less riders than Sound Transit had projected.

In addition, Sound Transit predicts that by the year 2030 truck traffic growth on I-90 would increase about 2% or less during peak times. This flies in the face of the American Trucking Associations US Freight Transportation Forecast to 2022, which indicates there will be a 24% increase in general freight over that time period.

Sound Transit also states that between the years 2020 and 2030, that a higher percentage of trucks is expected to cross Lake Washington during off peak times. While the trucking industry does everything in its power to avoid traveling during peak congestion times, we do not make the final decision on when we will be on the roadway. With the advent of warehouse on wheels and just in time delivery, our customers dictate our travel times. Therefore, to make the assumption that as time goes on trucking will choose to operate more during off peak hours is simply not accurate.

We have further concerns about the model used to project light rail's ridership and what impacts it would have on congestion. The information we have received indicates that slightly less than 1% of the projected East Link ridership will switch from single occupant vehicles, and that 64% would switch from more efficient HOVs and buses. Only about 1800 of the projected 5400 East Link riders would be new transit riders, and those may be mythical based on Sound Transit's past predictions.

In closing, we would ask that Sound Transit's FEIS be scrutinized very carefully before we spend billions of dollars to fix a congestion problem that may well be made worse by adding light rail to the I-90 Bridge.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. If you have any questions or we can be of further service, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Larry A Pursley
Executive Vice President
Washington Trucking Associations