



March 9, 2007

Dear Members of the State Legislature:

On behalf of the Sound Transit Board, I am writing to express our strong opposition to SSB 5803 relating to regional transportation governance. We strongly urge you to vote against this bill.

Last session, you directed Sound Transit and the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) to put a package of regional transportation investments on the ballot this fall. We embraced the state's directive and, building on months of planning, environmental review, cost estimating, expert review panels, and public outreach, the joint Roads & Transit package is coming together. The Puget Sound Regional Council and the Washington State Department of Transportation are partners in this collaboration. Sound Transit has set priorities, made tough choices, done the environmental work and cost estimating, the public outreach, and all the due diligence required for good transportation planning.

The restructuring contemplated in the Senate bill is sweeping and should be thoughtfully reviewed to avoid unintended consequences. For example, the bill would separate land use and economic planning from transportation planning. It would also separate transportation planning from project delivery. In our judgment, such changes would diffuse public accountability rather than strengthen it. The logistics alone of start-up and re-tracing major planning efforts that state and regional agencies have already completed would set the region back years and potentially take transportation solutions further from the public's reach than they are today. The bill does not fix the tensions on the Alaskan Way Viaduct or the funding problems in the region or on SR 520. Sweeping changes in transportation governance just as we are preparing to put a \$16.5 billion investment package on the ballot sends mixed signals to the public. And if the ballot measure is delayed or postponed, the price tag goes up – a one year of delay for the Sound Transit 2 package will add \$800 million to the cost of our package.

The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) itself concluded "there is a clear shortfall in funding for needed transportation projects." The state established a path last year to address this problem, and Sound Transit and RTID are prepared to step up with a 20-year investment package for public consideration. Further, while the RTC proposed significant governance reforms, it also embraced the importance of the 2007 election. Referencing

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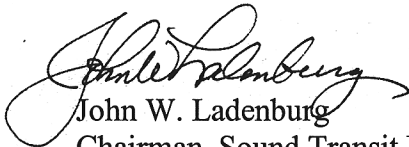
Joni Earl

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recent efforts by the state and region to enact and sustain new revenues for transportation, the co-chairs wrote, "We hope that a shared commitment continues, in producing broad public support for the upcoming Regional Transportation Investment District – Sound Transit joint ballot proposal in November 2007." The joint package is consistent with these findings, and we believe will appeal to people across the region frustrated with transportation and traffic.

Last year, you asked the region to work together on a regional transportation package, and we've done just that. We have a good plan that expands light rail and provides the regional share of the investments you are making through the Nickel and TPA packages. Please don't send a vote of "no confidence" on the fall Roads & Transit package by supporting this bill. We urge you to vote no and give us a chance to succeed this fall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John W. Ladenburg".

John W. Ladenburg
Chairman, Sound Transit Board

c: Sound Transit Board members
The Honorable Christine Gregoire
The Honorable Lisa Brown
The Honorable Dan Swecker
Joni Earl, Chief Executive Officer