From: Sally Stapp
To: PDS comments
Subject: Replacement Guemes Ferry Proposal
Date: Thursday, February 15, 2018 11:18:56 AM

Dear Skagit County Planning & Development Services;

As the Replacement Guemes Ferry Proposal is being considered please scrutinize all available population and ridership data with regards to the proposed size (32 cars) of the replacement Guemes ferry boat. Consider scheduling and staffing choices that could better mitigate ridership issues than an excessively large (and expensive) boat. Take care that the idea of a larger boat isn't just a simple solution to cater to the crush of summer ridership and encourage too much growth on Guemes. Cater instead to riders who choose alternative, environmentally friendly modes of transport.

Carefully consider the negative effects of excessive population growth and new development on Guemes Island's sole source aquifer. I have been involved with the Waterworks Group - a subcommittee of the Guemes Island Environmental Trust - for more than ten years. My family considers me the water witch - when it come to conserving our vital resource. I purchased forty five PUD's dial-read water meters when PUD transitioned to digital, remote read meters. Those meters are now helping Guemes islanders keep track of their water use and detect wasteful leaks. The waterworks group also distributed hundreds of 55-gallon barrels for rainwater catchment and held rainwater collection educational tours. It's encouraging to see that Skagit County is finally realizing rainwater catchment is an important solution to water issues in critical areas like Guemes Island.

In addition to conserving water another issue of great concern on Guemes Island is sea water intruding into our ground water as more and more straws draw more and more fresh water from our only fresh water source - our aquifer. If Skagit County allows uncontrolled growth on Guemes all current residents are in danger of losing their well water.

Rather than building an overly expensive, unnecessarily large 32 car ferry please consider a more flexible sailing schedule that recognizes peak ridership needs. Currently Ferry management hires a "mid-watch" person during peak season from 9am to 5pm. That decision ignores the workers who have to leave the island between 6:30 & 8:30 am and the crush of returning islanders from 5:30pm on. A more fluid schedule should be able to cater to ridership surges. Management's decision to schedule refueling during the busy 11:15am to 1:00pm slot inconveniences the ridership. Add a permanent 11:45 run.

Take care that we aren't being blinded by the allure of "new" technology. Will Skagit County be on the leading edge or the bleeding edge of electric boats?

Sally Stapp
5191 Lewis Lane
Guemes Island
Anacortes, WA
98221