

Exhibit A-30: McLoud statement

My name is Phil McCloud and I am representing the Skagit Bicycle Club. I am a past president of the Club and currently a member of the board of directors for the Club. The Skagit Bicycle Club is a non-profit organization that supports and promotes bicycle riding in Skagit County. The Club represents approximately 250 road cyclists.

I have been a bicyclist for most of my life and a fairly serious road cyclist for the past 30 plus years. I have ridden thousands of miles in different parts of the country in the southeast, the northeast, the midwest, the southwest and the northwest. This experience has given me a very good perspective on bicycle safety and what constitutes roads that are safe for cyclists. I take bicycle safety very seriously and it is always a consideration when I choose the times and places where I ride or plan rides for others.

One of the things that the Skagit Bicycle Club does is organize group rides for our members and guests. The Club holds three or more organized rides starting from various locations around the county each week, throughout the year. Our Club also hosts a website that allows members to communicate easily and organize ad hoc rides on short notice. In addition, each year we hold a large fund-raising ride, the Skagit Spring Classic, that typically attracts 400 – 700 riders from around the Pacific Northwest to Skagit County to enjoy the beautiful scenery and quiet roads in the county. In all these events, safety is upper most in our minds as we plan the routes we will ride.

In my opinion, the things that make a road safe for bicyclists are:

1. Low traffic volume
2. If traffic is heavier, shoulders or dedicated bicycle lanes that allow bicyclists to ride outside the normal traffic flow
3. Clear visibility and long sight lines
4. Courteous drivers that give space to bicyclists when they pass

Prairie and Grip Roads are currently considered relatively safe bicycle routes because the traffic is light, and the drivers are generally courteous because most of them are local people that are driving in the vicinity of their homes. The area is also scenic, and the Grip Road hill provides a challenge for riders. These roads connect with other roads in the area such as F&S Grade Road, Parsons Creek Road, Mosier Road and Fruitdale Road providing a route that connects the area north of Sedro Woolley with the Skagit Valley. The 100 mile route for the Skagit Spring Classic employs Prairie and Grip Roads for this reason.

As a result, this is a popular area for bicyclists. My best estimate for how many bicyclists use these roads is as follows:

Skagit Bicycle Club organized rides use some part of Prairie Road probably 2 to 3 times per month for 9 months out of the year. For the remaining 3 months about once per month. On average organized rides have about 15 riders. Based upon these estimates:

- 2.5 rides per month x 15 riders per ride x 9 months = 338 riders
- 1 ride per month x 15 riders per ride x 3 months = 45 riders
- Skagit Spring Classic = 50 riders

Total riders per year for organized rides on Prairie Road = 433 riders

Grip Road is used less often for organized rides. On average approximately four times per year. Based on this estimate:

- 4 rides x 15 riders per ride = 60 riders
- Skagit Spring Classic = 50 riders

Total riders per year for organized rides on Grip Road = 110 riders

Most of the organized rides are held during the week in mid-morning. These roads are also frequented by individual or small groups of informal riders because of the reasons I stated earlier.

In my experience riding these roads, the current traffic is very light with primarily automobiles and very little commercial traffic, making the area ideal for bicyclists. Prairie Road is traveled in both directions depending upon where the ride starts. Grip Road is primarily ridden east up the hill but occasionally down the hill to Prairie Road. The intersection of Prairie Road and Grip Road is a problematic intersection that we always approach with caution. Grip Road is steep and curving with limited sight lines making it difficult for motor vehicles to see and avoid bicyclists. Currently the light traffic on Grip Road mitigates this problem.

The installation of a gravel quarry would change all these conditions. Traffic volume would increase significantly, and it would be large trucks and trailers. Neither Prairie nor Grip Roads currently have shoulders that would allow bicyclists to ride outside the traffic lanes. Because both roads are curving and Grip Road is steep, visibility is limited making it difficult for motorists to see and avoid bicyclists. The composition of the traffic will change from mostly local people going about their business to large commercial vehicles on a schedule. Without significant changes to the current road conditions bicycle riding on Prairie, Grip and connecting roads will become very hazardous.

I do have experience riding on a road in Skagit County that is frequented by large trucks hauling gravel and rock. There is considerable truck traffic to and from a quarry on Beaver Lake Road south of the Clear Lake. I consider this a relatively safe road for bicycling because even with the quarry it meets most of the criteria I listed earlier. The traffic volume is low except for the trucks. This is mitigated because there are shoulders along the road that allow cyclists to move out of the travel way. The road is fairly straight and allows truck drivers to clearly see bicyclists and other vehicles as they approach. As a result, truck drivers can avoid making last second decisions that about passing or slowing down that endanger others. All these factors make Beaver Lake Road one where large trucks and bicyclists can co-exist. Without significant changes to the roads this will not be the case on Prairie and Grip Roads.

I understand that business development is considered necessary for continued prosperity in Skagit County. But, as a resident and taxpayer in Skagit County I also have a right to use the roads in the county and to express an opinion about how the roads are used. As a bicyclist I have a right to use public roads for bicycle riding. The development of this gravel quarry on Grip Road without significant improvements to the road infrastructure seems like a uniquely bad idea. It will make these roads and the surrounding beautiful and scenic areas inaccessible to bicyclists.