

## Ferry Rate Comments A through G

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## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Chip Bogosian <chip@bogosian.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 10:06 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** Armen Bogosian  
**Subject:** Guesses ferry comments

#####

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#####

Serious consideration is needed on the following topics:

1. What is your plan “B” when the electric ferry fails.
2. The population of Guemes Island is bi-modal—the haves and the have nots, in addition to the many disabled older folks. The proposed ferry rate increase will be an extraordinary burden on the population that is living from their current income. This could be construed as discrimination.
3. Should the ferry be run by a private enterprise akin to the Pierce County ferry? The litany of mismanagement issues are too numerous to mention here.
4. The increase in property taxes which in my case was 20%, brings home the fact that Skagit County has had a large margin of “profit” from Guemes Island for years, and the road tax is substantial. Aside from last year, county expenditures on our roads is substantially lower than the funds taken in. Time for us to fully benefit from these funds and use them for ferry funding.
5. Pierce county received 14.74% of their revenue source from FTA 5307 whereas the Guemes ferry received a minuscule amount from this source—Why?
6. The intangible of Guemes Ferry riders adapting to a huge fare increase has not been ascertained. This is a clever group and they will find ways to avert the increase.

Thank you for your consideration,

A. Bogosian  
chip@bogosian.net

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Gmail <adammimnaugh@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 6:13 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners; guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Family and business impact

#####  
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#####

As a 23 year member of the Guemes community, my family and I feel as though we are being taxed out of the area. Cost of housing, property taxes, food expenses, fuel expenses, and now a price hike on our ferry is inflating cost of living nearly past what most people can afford.

On this rate increase, I haven't seen any simple math showing how the consultant came up with these rates. It seems suspect that the ferry committee hasn't been given that information, even after requesting it.

The 14' vehicle length should be 16' so that it actually covers most small vehicles, and walk on ridership should be encouraged with a minimum increase. The oversized vehicle rates are wildly overpriced and will cause even more vendors and service providers to hit us even harder or not service us at all.

I believe a partial solution would be to offer commuters lower rate passes to residents who live on Guemes by purchasing from Skagit county online, and then have higher rates at the ferry terminal for those off island tourists and visitors.

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Adam Veal <adamveal57@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 8:44 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Fair? Proposal

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To All,

As someone who tries to live a humble, give back, lifestyle...

My family cannot afford the fare increase.

To buy monthly punches, for my family, that amounts to \$500. To take my family to town and walk home, that will be \$42, for the ferry fare.

There is one general store on Guemes, and few services. We need to go to town for most things.

Our family has enjoyed Guemes since the 1940's. My wife and three boys will not be able to continue living on Guemes.

I have worked for the City of Anacortes for 15 years. I have been a Cemetery Commissioner for 10 years. I try to give back.

The fare proposal is dread.

If I ran the ferry I would make more in revenue by maximizing "ridership" per hour. Per hour volume is the key. Lower fares would generate demand.

Higher fares reduce ridership.

Sadly,

Adam Veal

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Adam Veal <adamveal57@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 2, 2023 7:57 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** The Launch

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To All,

This is ridiculous...

My kids are scared to ride the launch, for fear of being left in town.

My kids were left in town yesterday. The Launch ran without waiting for the kids.

One of our Guemes third graders, was stuck in town, today, for four hours.

Adam Veal

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Ahna Van Gaest <vangaest@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 12:46 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** I oppose the Guemes ferry fare increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

I was at the commissioners meeting and agree with much of what was said during the public comment period.

A 71-120% ferry fare increase with very little notice is preposterous. And cruel to folk who can't absorb those costs but still have to take the ferry to get to their jobs or doctors appointments. I'm shocked at the lack of regard this proposed plan shows your constituents on Guemes Island. It's appears you find it easy to "other" us, and use us as the scapegoat to your budget shortfalls. But we're not others. We're tax payers and members of Skagit county.

Our little family uses the ferry daily to get to our jobs as an emergency physician and marine biologist, and our kids go to school and daycare in anacortes. We surely will change our ferry habits and start walking over instead of driving if the proposed fare increase is implemented based on the sticker shock. We're just one family, but by my calculations we spend about \$5k per year mainly driving onto the ferry and by switching to mainly walk-ons we would decrease that to around \$2500.

We are also re-considering whether Guemes Island is the right place for us to raise our family based on the implications of this proposal. We are months away from finishing the house we started building in 2020, and are now worried about our property value. If you are willing to try to squeeze this much money out of Guemes Islanders today, why wouldn't you do it again, and again? That uncertainty will greatly affect property values.

Families need time to plan their future finances and budget transportation accordingly. I am requesting you rethink this excessive fare increase for a budget solution that is more balanced across all of Skagit county, and that takes into account how much Guemes Island tax payers put into the road fund (approx \$750k, by a friends calculations).

Sincerely,  
Ahna Van Gaest



**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** AL and DIANA MILLIKAN <almill99@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 10, 2023 9:05 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes island, ferry fares.

#####  
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My name is Al Millikan. I am a 31 year full-time resident of Guemes island.

You have recently received considerable detailed analytical input from Steve Orsini and Cindy Kamp on the proposed Guemes Island ferry fare increases. Their analyses raise serious questions about the proposed increases and how they were derived. I urge you to consider their analyses and recommendations with equal weight to that provided by the Skagit County staff, and the consultant. Your final determination will have serious impact on your constituents living on Guemes Island. It is essential that you take the time to make the correct judgments.

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 9:11 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Full Time Guemes Resident

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**From:** Alexie Gregory <alexierg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 26, 2023 3:27 PM  
**To:** Skagit County Public Works <pw@co.skagit.wa.us>; Lisa Janicki <ljanicki@co.skagit.wa.us>; Ron Wesen <ronw@co.skagit.wa.us>; Peter Browning <pbrowning@co.skagit.wa.us>; Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Full Time Guemes Resident

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Good evening,

I am writing regarding the proposed increase for the Guemes Island ferry. I wish I could be there in person but alas I work! My family of 4 is very concerned. We are permanent residents who use the ferry every day for work and school. This enormous and sudden increase could put us at such a place we are priced out of living here. We work hard (full-time employment) and both full time parents who love this island.

If the goal is to only have this island full of wealthy part time residents then I understand your desire to price out the working class and the elderly. The island community should continue to be a place people of all income levels are able to make it a home.

I am encouraging you to consider the small people instead of giving us the hardship to fix roads that do not even pertain to Guemes.

I do suggest raising the rates for ONE time purchases or uses. I always use a punch card. I go through tons of punch cards throughout the year. I do drive my car to town due to all of the theft and gas issues happening in the ferry parking lots. Better cameras aren't going to stop people from stealing. Could you not consider significantly increasing the tourists that day use the island or come over for a few days? Price them double the punch cards. It seems fair if tourists come to use the island they should help support its economy. I'd even be willing to pay the exorbitant cost if I was unable to purchase a punch card that one day.

I actually have the pleasure of working on the island allowing me to leave less than others. My place of employment has an extremely difficult time finding employees. Asking someone from Anacortes to come work on Guemes is not sustainable with a huge increase.

I realize my comments will not help or impact your decision and we are just dollar signs and feeling abused right now by this proposal. I hope a solution is able to be reached and I hope that the residents of Guemes are able to keep living here.

Thanks for your time,  
Alexie

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Allen Bush <bushman@mail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 11:21 AM  
**To:** Ron Wesen; Commissioners; Ferry Comments; Lisa Janicki; peterb@co.skagit.wa.us  
**Subject:** 2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To: Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning  
Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.  
Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe  
1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA. 98273

Re: SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION  
2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

Allen Bush  
6628 West Shore Drive  
Anacortes Wa. 98221

Dear Commissioners, Director, and Captain:

**Policy:** a course of action adopted or proposed by a government, business, or individual.

***Does the KPFF Report offer a better course of action for fare calculation policy?***

The short timeline that has been proposed for raising fares, although may reach the desired deadline, does not include any substantive public input or illumination of the budget items to be either inclusive or transparent.

Creation of any Ferry Fare Calculation Policy should involve more stakeholder and public scrutiny of the proposed Operations and Maintenance budget of \$3MM.

Guemes Island has participated in fare setting policy right alongside Public Works since Skagit County took over the system in 1960. In most recent years we have engaged in several year long studies of Fares that included as many as 62 meetings regarding our responsibilities and contributions to offset ferry costs.

This collaborative policy resides in the current resolution that is frequently referenced pointing out farebox shortfalls. This same resolution also contains the responsibility of Skagit County to administer their obligations of meeting timelines and communication of any hurdles that may require a fare increase. We all should agree to honor this policy.

**Process:** a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.

***Does the KPFF Report provide a better process of calculating fares?***

Only including a proposed Budget to calculate an accurate fare will not provide any more than an educated guess. In years past no projections or budgets have been anywhere close to the end result.

Leaving out real numbers from actual expenditures from prior years will only arrive at speculating on both income and presumptive costs.

Projections have always been used to create alarm and worry for those deciding whether or not to increase fares. We must wait and let them become real numbers and make decision then.

Looking back over a five-year period helps balance decisions between worry and certainty. Making incremental modifications to the fare structure with real numbers eases the pain of the abrupt shock of too much, too fast.

**Principle:** a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning.

***Does the KPFF Report use a better chain of reasoning for calculating a Fair Fare?***

A fare increase whether large or small needs to take into account what a reasonable fare should be for Guemes Island. Meeting an arbitrary number to meet expenses balloons rapidly into what we are seeing in the KPFF proposal. Assembling a collection of other ferry system methodologies from previous projects does not give confidence to the reasons we are collecting fares in the first place. Guemes Island residents have produced tax revenue, user fees and capital funding for years with the idea that we, when our time came, would be provided with upgrades to our ferry service and facilities. Without believing our contributions are appreciated there will be a lack of trust of those in care of our money.

Sincerely,  
Allen Bush

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Allen Bush <bushman@mail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 2, 2023 10:12 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Lisa Janicki; Ron Wesen; peterb@co.skagit.wa.us  
**Subject:** Skagit County Public Works 2023 Ferry Fare Increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To: Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning  
Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.  
Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe  
1800 Continental Place Mount Vernon, WA. 98273

Re: SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION  
2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

Allen Bush Sr  
4352 Edens Rd  
Anacortes, WA 98221

Commissioners,

I have lived on Guemes Island for over 60 years and served on the Ferry Committee for over 20. I am wondering how we got to a place where Public Works spending is not being measured or not putting costs in the proper columns of Operations and Maintenance and Capital costs.

Not all costs incurred during the haul outs are operating expenses. Any item that extends the life of the vessel is a capital cost. Structural steel, hull and deck plating and entire piping systems etc. are considered capital expenses. There are Federal and State funding sources that offset these capital costs, Public Works just needs to plan and apply for them.

Public Works is spending over \$100,000 of our Operating costs on a consultant to determine a new way to calculate fares based on a forecasted budget. No time in history have ferry users paid fares using future predictions. Actual cost and actual expenses determine user fees, especially when they are required to apply annually for State money to offset operational losses and Ferry deficits. The sky is the limit if left to outside consultants and staff speculation of future revenues.

Public Works has inflated Operations and Maintenance costs. The Ferry Manager spends time on the new ferry capital project, so much so, that an assistant manager was hired to manage the operation. There should be an adjustment as to where those wages and benefits fall and to whose side of the ledger is responsible.

The KPFF proposal should be discarded and Public Works should engage in cost cutting efforts and analyze their own records to determine how to stay within the limits of annual fares collected and outside revenue received. Ferry users will change their habits and find different ways to travel if fares are increased as proposed. Keeping fares low and the boat full will return the most revenue. I know, I've been involved for a long time.

Sincerely,

Allen Bush Sr

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Allen Bush <bushman@mail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 7, 2023 11:06 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Peter Browning; Lisa Janicki; Ron Wesen  
**Subject:** Let's Stay the course

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Skagit County Commissioners,

Who's to blame? Is it to the ferry users for not paying their fair share of operating costs? Despite the fact that ridership is flat and users changed their travel habits during a worldwide pandemic recently. All while the county decides to discontinue the collection of fares, but never compensating the ferry system or ferry users with any of the \$37M in COVID money they received?

Is it to the commissioners for skipping five opportunities to increase fares in the past 5 years and then recommending a consultant study to project an operating budget for a brand-new electric ferry that isn't even built yet? Do we know what the future operating costs will be?

Is it to the crew who inadvertently incurred \$5,300 in fender bender insurance claims that have ballooned to \$572k in operating expense? All while continuing to do their job without a labor contract?

Or to KPFF, the consultant who followed a project directive to increase fares and find another \$750k in annual operating revenue. Yet in the process failed to mention that several of their suggested changes will cost ferry users even more money?

The answer is all of the above. There is no one group or item on our list that does not contribute to the success or failure of the Guemes Island Ferry. We have a system in place that measures all of these things in a meaningful way and everyone is included. Let's stay the course. I suggest we work together to make our system the shining star of Puget Sound, if not North America.

Let's start with the process of increasing fares in an open and transparent way, one that exists in the standing public forum resolution. Let's keep the quarterly updates highlighting the hurdles and successes that will make our system predictable and sustainable for everyone involved.

Last fall our neighbor, Pierce County, analyzed the 3 county ferry systems, giving common metrics to measure their differences and similarities. The Guemes Island Ferry has the lowest cost per passenger moved at or below \$5.00. The Guemes Island Ferry also has the lowest cost per hour of operation at \$600. Maybe it's the fact that we are required to return 65% of our operating costs through fares while the other counties are required to return only 55%. Meanwhile the Skagit County Road Fund is holding our \$1M in ferry surcharge money for a ferry purchase 40 years from now. It appears we are contributing our fare share.

Two months ago, KPFF gave Pierce County a very similar analysis to the one developed here for Skagit County. KPFF warned Pierce County that offering free passage to those 18 years and under, a reduced needs-based fare and the smaller 14-foot vehicle category would be a potential annual revenue loss of \$300k. Why are these losses absent from our report? KPFF predicts an annual haul out cost of \$750k. In 5-years we will have collected \$3.75M for haul outs when we might see actual costs of half that. What will need to be repaired on a brand-new all electric ferry two years into

service? KPFF also predicts system revenue from the state at \$350k each year. In 2022 Skagit County experienced a record breaking \$585k state funding number. Not sure looking ahead is wise or sustainable. Let's continue to use actual costs and real revenue numbers. Let's not price people out of their homes with projected budgets to calculate fares.

To get this 40-year-old diesel ferry across the finish line let's not become dependent on consultants to calculate our fares, but let's rely on our policy, our process and each other to deliver solutions that other ferry systems can look to for guidance. For the future, when our new ferry comes online, we can use these agreed upon policies and processes to measure the progress and adjust accordingly. Let's avoid a future where green energy profiteers will suggest their solutions only to embarrass state legislators who have banked on the idea that this new technology will lower operating costs, provide good paying jobs and create livable communities.

Let's Stay the course.

Allen Bush

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Andy Leech <andyleech@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2023 11:50 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Ferry Fare Comments

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An objective of the Ferry Fare Proposal is the use of previous studies and stakeholder input to guide the process. On real topic includes the concept of "fare fatigue" among the regular ridership. There has been considerable stakeholder input offered. I hope it is considered by KPFF consulting.

An important aspect of planning for ferry fare changes should include use of real costs for operating the new ferry. I question the need to make precipitous ferry fee decisions in advance of new ferry operations.

Andy Leech  
Guemes Resident and Ferry Committee Member

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Andy Leech <andyleech@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 10:56 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners; guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Guemes Island Ferry Fare Rate Study Personal Impact

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To: Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning  
Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.  
Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon WA 98273

Re: SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION  
2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

From: Robert A. Leech, Colonel, USAF Ret  
Veronica A. Leech, RN Ret  
6151 S Shore Rd  
Anacortes WA 98221

Dear Commissioners, Director, and Captain:

***Bottom Line Up Front: I ask you to seriously reflect on the significant—and adverse—impact that this proposed fare rate increase will have on my family and almost every other household on Guemes Island and rescope (downward) the proposed increases.***

My wife and I have owned our property on Guemes since the early 1970s, and finally after 30 years in the Air Force traveling the world, retired in 1999 and were able to fulfill our dream and move to Guemes. Shortly thereafter I "failed" retirement and started a 10-year mini career with the Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society at Naval Station Everett. Every day began and ended with a trip on the Guemes ferry. So too my wife who continued her nursing career, relied on the ferry to get to work.

We are now in our mid-70s (75 and 74) and continue to be regular ferry users, though now many of our trips off island are for medical appointments. In 2022 our purchases of ferry tickets came to a bit over \$2,020. That number will increase to approximately \$4,444 (based on data in the Fare Type Increase Comparison on p.11 of the **kpff** rate study public hearing draft, Feb 23, 2023). Let me put that number in my perspective. Our combined Social Security Benefits (\$4,188) will cover roughly 94% of the projected new ferry cost. Fortunately, after adding my VA Disability payment (\$327.99), we'll have \$71.99 left over. I cannot imagine that any of you agree that it is acceptable to use all of our Social Security and most of my VA Disability entitlement to pay for our ferry rate increase.

We can't realistically consider moving off the island given the cost of doing so at this point in our lives. Though the assessed (taxable) value of our home is unlikely to decrease, I imagine the sales value of the property will go down due to the doubling of the cost of ferry service to and from our home in Skagit County.

Please carefully read and consider all the letters that you receive on this matter. I wish the county had made all them available to the public in a timely fashion so that I knew if other topics (impact on services and businesses we use in Anacortes and the rest of Skagit County, etc.) were addressed.

Best regards,

Robert A. (Andy) Leech, Colonel USAF Ret  
Commissioner, Skagit County Cemetery District 3

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** andyself1@aol.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 7, 2023 8:14 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Comments on new ferry fare structure

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

The 2023 Ferry Fare Proposal posted online states that Skagit County has asked the Consultant to evaluate a needs-based discount. This report will then be presented to the Board of County Commissioners to provide a basis for their fare structure decisions. I am requesting that further information on this scheme be provided addressing the following concerns

1. Government-administered needs-based programs are typically means-tested to prevent fraud. Will there be a financial need evaluation protocol used? If so, what will be the criteria? Be specific.
2. What documentation will be required? What will be the frequency of re-evaluation? This program would be fundamentally different than the current Over 65/disabled fare structure, as peoples' financial situations are subject to change.
3. The means testing protocol would require County oversight. Will there be a budget item that will provide the resources for this process? Please provide a cost estimate.
4. As with many government programs that subsidize the poor, demand frequently exceeds resources. Will there be a limit to the size of this program? If not, will fare structures be revised in response to maintain required revenues?

Sincerely,  
Andy Self  
7127 Upland Drive  
Anacortes, WA 98221

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** andyself1@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, February 24, 2023 5:50 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Needs Based Fares

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Please provide further documentation for the needs-based fare category in terms of how it will be implemented and administered. Be specific.

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Angela Starston <astarston@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 9:22 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Proposed Guemes Ferry Increase Feedback

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Hi there,

I live on Guemes Island and was horrified when I saw the proposed Guemes Island Ferry fee increases. While there are quite a lot of people with money buying land and homes on this island, and there are a lot of tourists who like to visit, *there are also a lot of regular folks out here too*. A different approach needs to be found. Increasing the ferry fee at such a steep rate will hurt a lot of the people who live in this lovely community.

I have struggled with a debilitating illness and recovering from that illness for years. As a result, I am unemployed. My spouse is the primary income earner for our household. We make every effort to keep our costs to a minimum, because we enjoy living in this beautiful place so much. Living here has helped me to recover from the illness and to begin rehabilitating. And I am not the only one. There are others like me who love living here, but who are not rich in money. We are, however, rich in community and nature. Why would you want to hurt that?

I understand your need to raise money to repair roads in other parts of the county, but there is no reason for that to have such an enormous impact on Guemes Island residents. You need to find a way for the people living in those places to pay for their roads. The proposed ferry fee increases are irrationally high, and I hope you will reconsider.

Regards,  
Angela Starston

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Ann Naymie <anaymie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 8:09 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Cc:** guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry Rate Hike

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Please re-consider, as elected or appointed officials, your proposal to raise the Guemes Ferry rates by 71%. One can't help but question your budget management, your fiscal responsibility, your hidden agendas, and your choice to exploit local citizens.

For those who live on island and work off island, or those who provide services on island but live off island, these are forced costs and they are captive ferry riders. There are no alternatives.

A progressive ferry rate increase over 4-5 years, starting at 15%, is understandable, ethical and humane.

Do the right thing!!

Ann Naymie

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Anya Mayo | The Mayo Home Team <anya@mayohometeam.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 9:10 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry Rate Increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To Who It May Concern,

I am a Guemes Islander of 15+ years. I am a realtor, small business owner, veteran, and a mother/daughter/wife. My family consists of my husband(a small business owner), two little girls, my mother and her husband, and my in-laws. We all live together on one property. We did this in order to all be able to survive in an already expensive place to live. Living together has its challenges at times but it was the solution we needed as a young family making our way with aging parents on retired fixed incomes.

Being that I am a realtor, I have already started to receive phone calls from people who are in tears, realizing the fact that they cannot afford to live on this island any longer after spending almost their entire lives here. These are individuals that planned for retirement all while keeping in mind the cost of inflation which we are already so deep into. Power bills have very recently had a large rate increase as has our groceries and property taxes, just to name a few.

My children already face the challenges of not being a part of extracurricular activities in the rest of the county. This is what we signed up for as islanders. In turn, our kids have the benefit of growing up in a beautiful place watched over by a colorful tight-knit community of characters. This is what makes our island so special. I am concerned not only for the financial impact this will have on our most vulnerable demographics, but what it will do to the quality of this community in the long run. What it will do to the children who will be our community of the future. Although gentrification is not a fair housing violation, it is what leads to homelessness which this state suffers greatly from. This will end up costing the state, the county, and the cities a lot of money in the long run due to food stamps, insurance, housing, etc. And will greatly damage the quality of our communities.

The division in our county community that our commissioner has attempted to create is dubious in many ways. This must not continue. Ron Wessen has been the driver of this project against Guemes. This dividing tactic must not continue and should not have been used in the first place.

I suggest that we use the road fund as intended for the entire county which includes the ferry. This is Public Works' responsibility. FEMA will likely cover the Fonk Rd repairs. As you know, Guemes property owners will contribute more than the proposed cap of \$750,000 to the Road Fund in 2023 through property taxes. Guemes residents will also contribute \$595,609 to the general Skagit County fund in 2023. This should not go unnoticed. Both Whatcom and Pierce County ferries have a greater portion of their county road fund contributing to their ferry operations. This too should not go unnoticed. The county needs to take a look at the Steilacoom/Anderson and Lummi Island ferries to see what we could model in order to save costs on the Guemes ferry. Or, perhaps, the county should hire a marine management firm to

run the ferry. Leave it to someone who knows how to properly manage the ferry and its costs. An increase in rates is clearly needed but let's do it in a graduated way. The ticket booth is not a good idea whatsoever. We should look to our ferry workers for suggestions on this subject since they are the boots on the ground.

I ask that the commissioners and county provide us with transparent information. What will this large increase of money go towards? Why have you not provided the information that our ferry committee has requested? We have an amazing ferry committee of intelligent, well-articulated individuals. As part of this community who are impacted just the same, they have solid suggestions and should have been consulted with in making these decisions in the first place, prior to spending 80K on a consulting firm.

I ask that you reapproach this decision. Look to some alternative solutions which have been suggested by many within the community. I am hopeful that we can come to a solution that works well for everyone.

Thank you so much for your consideration,

Anya Mayo

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**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Barb Cameron <barbcameron55@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 9:58 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** ticket rise proposals

#####  
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#####

These increases in fares are going to be prohibitive for residents on regular incomes. In particular those who need to drive to work or school or kids activities, will be facing in the vicinity of \$250 weekly costs. Why are they so much higher than the equivalent type ferry in Whatcom County. Did the report address this? Can we have maintain a full time resident fare that is in keeping with current prices, and make the big increases for visitors.

sincerely  
Barb Cameron  
resident

Sent from my iPhone

To: *Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning*  
*Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.*  
*Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe*  
*1800 Continental Place*  
*Mount Vernon, WA. 98273*

Re: **SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION**  
**2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE**

From: *Becca Fong*  
*6204 Guemes Island Rd.*  
*Anacortes WA. 98221*

Dear Commissioners, Director, and Captain:

As I sit at my computer typing this letter at 11:30pm on a Friday night after putting in 50+ hours of work this week, doing all the things to raise my two elementary school age kids, and (in the remaining precious hours of the day) organize and support the community on Guemes to **implore you to stop this fare rate proposal and take a hard look at the actual need to create a viable annual ferry O&M budget –**

**I am frustrated, angry, and disappointed.**

**I'm frustrated that:**

- **The rate proposal process has not been transparent.** That Public Works has not clearly defined the problem causing the O&M shortfall for 2023 and has not looked into ways of decreasing costs and/or finding alternate sources of funding.
- **That the timeline to implement this new fare increase is very compressed.** It doesn't follow any previous processes and does not provide any room for discussion or looking into different ways of doing things.
- **The proposed cost increase will change my family's cost of ferry ridership from \$3,166/year to \$5,206/year. This difference of \$2,040 is a substantial cost that impact decisions for our family –** like which sports our kids can play, and how often can they take lessons to learn to swim. And we consider ourselves fortunate that we do not have to make more difficult choices, but it will decrease the amount we drive onto and take the ferry.

**I'm angry that:**

- **The financial impact on many of my friends and family members who have fixed incomes will face hard choices, as they cannot afford to pay fares that increase close to 100%.** They will have to make choices about which medical appointments they can go to, how to earn a living with this huge financial impact in the mix. Many will suffer because of this.
- **Grace Kane has said that "island residents need to pay their share". We pay more into the Road Fund than the cap of \$750,000 she is proposing.**

- **Public Works has mismanaged its funds to the point that Grace Kane has said that she can't afford to spend money on the Guemes ferry in order to fix Fonk Road.** That is Public Work's responsibility to manage their capital improvement plan, not Guemes ferry users.

**I'm disappointed that:**

- **That the County is willing to pit Skagitonian against Skagitonian** by implying that the necessary repairs to Fonk Road wouldn't happen because of the Road Fund contribution that is attributed to the Guemes ferry. That is just low.

We all support each other as Skagitonians. To imply otherwise is insulting. We all pay our taxes to support the greater good – so the Skagit County government can properly steward those funds to provide the essential services that we need to thrive as a county.

- **Public Works and the Commissioners are willing to ignore the Skagit County Strategic Commitments** to:
  - o Provide solutions to problems and questions, not just responses
  - o Continually measure, evaluate, and improve services and delivery
  - o Ensure responsible stewardship of public assets and financial resources
  - o Provide transparent and fiscally responsible governance that inspires public confidence

I have spent my career in public service. I know you likely pride yourselves on doing what is right for residents, providing the services that make Skagit County the special place that it is, and are honored to be trusted with the responsibility to do that well. **It pains me to see Skagit County forcing this proposal through a process without transparency, accountability, interest in looking at alternatives, finding efficiencies, or meaningful public engagement.** You can do better than this.

**At its best** - It's a lack of consideration for residents, visitors, businesses, and others who love and support the Guemes ferry and Skagit County.

**At its worst** - It's local government that lacks the ability to manage its resources and is willing to obfuscate the truth and pit residents against each other to hide that inability.

If you have made it this far, thank you. And I will close with – **Please stop this process and work with us to find a sustainable solution that will work now and into the future.**

Sincerely,

Becca Fong

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** becca fong <highlandparkparadise@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 12:24 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Cc:** Guemes Ferry  
**Subject:** A path forward to a sustainable collaborative ferry system

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Hello Public Works staff and Board of Commissioners,

I appreciate the opportunity to help make the ferry system as efficient and sustainable as possible. You have heard a lot from my fellow ferry stakeholders, and myself. So at this point in the process, I implore you to:

- **Look closely at cost saving opportunities for the ferry system and develop a process to do this annually.** I know there are complexities that make digging into the accounting of the ferry division cumbersome, but the devil is truly in the details. The issue of the huge insurance expenditure in 2022 is a prime example of where looking closely at expenses and having a process to do this would have saved the ferry division and incredible expense.

- **Look closely at the which expenses are charge to O&M and Capital Expense.** While we're working to bring the new ferry online, there are monies available to charge to that effort. Making sure that those expenses aren't charged to O&M is an important way to find some cost savings.

- **Consider using a portion of the surcharge revenue as part of the farebox revenue.** I appreciate planning for the future beyond the M/V Guemes II, however, I believe that having some of those funds available for use to address current potential shortfalls in fare revenue could provide a sustainable contingency fund to buffer the fluctuations in the other funding sources.

I am interested in developing a solid process for developing the fare targets that solves the issues that have come to light with this recent series of events. This will be an interactive process, that I and many of my fellow community members are willing to help with.

The current proposal was based on the premise of capping the Road Fund contribution, which is now not part of the equation. However, the approach of the Guemes ferry as a drain on the County resources has become the dominant narrative, that if cost savings, close attention to accounting, and a continued commitment to explore additional funding sources are done - I think we can shift that perspective to show that the Guemes Ferry system can be an asset to the County and not a burden.

With sincerity and the spirit of collaboration,  
Becca Fong

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Betsy Jeffers <jeffersrnb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 7:24 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** Commissioners; guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Public Comment - Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Greetings,

I am requesting that the County Commissioner's do not move forward with the ferry rate increase as presented by KPFF at this time.

The proposal does not provide enough data to ensure that the study was completed accurately, and more importantly with thought to the full-time residents that will be impacted, which includes my husband and me.

I am not opposed to raising the fares; however, I am opposed to this affecting the senior residents that may be on a fixed income or for the younger families that are just starting out in one "fare hit", so to speak. And again, my husband and me!

I am hoping you took a few things, listed below, into consideration.

**Marine Highway:** The ferry system should be considered as a marine highway, and not added inconvenience. It should be included in all budgets.

- Have you compared this to the Alaska Marine Highway and how they handle this. This is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration
- Or possibly the San Francisco, CA ferry system that is also in need of a fare increase.

**Budget:** Provide data on what is included in or excluded in the proposed budget. You have fallen short on your budget every year since 2018.

- Why were there no increases since 2018 (sur charge) and no real increase since 2015.
- It seems unfair that this oversight and mismanagement should be put to the residents in **one** increase. Some options:
  - Phased over time.
  - Hold and review if the new proposed ferry will solve or alleviate this issue.

**Rate Structure:** What is the reason we have such a **complex** rate structure. Offering a reduced fare for vehicles 14' or less is a nice, but in realty that will not offer a discount to many.

- Consider moving that to 16.'
- Keep the 22' rate, and charge overages by the foot (BC Ferries does this effectively) as it seems that if the vehicle is only a foot over, you are moved to the next fare which is in 10' increments once over 30'.

**Cost Reduction Measures:** Where is a listing of cost reduction measures that will be put into place?

- Have you considered, instead of a fare booth, possibly having a card that can be loaded online, based on type, so you can tap and go. This allows folks to reload online or at the ticket booth in the terminal. I like to think of this as a type of "fast pass" or "fast track" which many cities use.
  - Would not impact loading which is effective.

- Allows electronic refilling.
- Saves on the paper cards which are thrown away when completed.

**Change of Ridership:** With the new increase, **we will modify our ridership**, as will many, which will impact your arbitrary budget.

- Loss of revenue spending in our neighboring areas (Anacortes, Burlington, La Conner, Mt. Vernon, etc.) which will impact businesses struggling already.
- More walk on traffic – loss of car revenue.

**Unforeseen Costs:** We run the risk of more and more businesses not servicing our island. We already pay an increased charge for the ferry fare, wait time for the worker which is a loss to the business making it more and more unattractive for goods and services, not to mention the store, the resort and other small businesses on the island.

In closing, I could continue to provide reasons, but I feel that I have provided you with some insight to how this will impact the residents of Guemes Island.

As I mentioned, we will change how we go about our daily lives when it comes to hopping into town. It will be a planned event.

Remember, we are a part of Skagit County and should have the same considerations as other residents in our fine community.

Please reconsider this!

Respectfully submitted,  
~Betsy Jeffers  
7870 Shaw Street

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** zellarelli@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 5:03 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Proposed ferry rates

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear Ferry Committee,

I watched with great interest the recording of the meeting on February 28th. I heartily agree with almost every comment by Guemes Island residents.

Increasing ferry rates by such a huge amount will be very detrimental to island residents, who must use the ferry regularly for work, school, medical needs and grocery shopping to say the least.

The increase for seniors/disabled at 105% is outrageous and hurts the most vulnerable island residents, many of whom are on fixed incomes, who are supposed to be receiving reduced rates. These new rates hikes will hurt working people, schoolkids, those needing regular medical care and so many others. I feel like the KPFF did not take any of this into account when making their recommendations. While they may analyze and create reports and recommendations, Guemes residents are people, all with their own needs and budgets, trying to live a normal life. We have no resources on the island beyond the General Store, so have no option but to take the ferry for almost all our needs.

I agree with the many comments about how they will be forced to cut back on using the ferry. I will too. Ferry usage will almost certainly decrease, which will not fix the problem of funds.

We are taxpayers, all of us paying into the road fund. The arbitrary cap should be strongly reconsidered before raising ticket rates such a shocking percentage.

Additionally, increases like this should be done in stages, rather than getting hit with a huge increase all at once. This should have been planned by the ferry committee. Why wasn't it?

The changes to ticket ferry structure should also be reconsidered. Hardly any cars are less than 14 feet. The truck increases will cause vendors to either refuse to come to Guemes or pass the large increases onto the consumer. Charging residents who buy passes peak rates is unfair. The KPFF is digging up new ways to charge us more--it feels like the airline companies.

I'd be interested to know if any KPFF consultants or any members of the Ferry committee live on Guemes. You should try walking a mile in our shoes--and our wallets.

Sincerely,

Betsy Passarelli  
6124 S Shore Rd  
Guemes



## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Beverly James <beverlyjames33@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 2:05 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Comments on Guemes Ferry Rate

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Hello-

I spoke by Zoom at the meeting and just wanted to reiterate what I said- plus add a little!

First, I appreciate hearing from Commissioner Janicki about the error in property taxes for 2023. What I thought was a whopping 30% increase is actually about 15%. Quite a difference!

I think that the combination of news out of the county between property taxes and ferry increases had many of us feeling like we had a big target on our backs. Like we were the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for Mt Vernon.

As to the ferry. As a relative newcomer to the island, I don't have the history of all that has transpired in the past, but I can see that the models you have been using up to now are not sustainable. And yet, hitting Seniors and Disabled folks with the kinds of increases you are talking about is similarly unsustainable. These are real people who have worked hard their whole lives. They should not be shoved aside because Guemes has been "Discovered".

We have only been property owners here for 12 years and are already dismayed at the changes. I can't imagine how the old timers feel! No wonder they are cranky. Guemes is a special place with a very close knit community in spite of our weirdness. People drawn to this kind of a place are independent and can be difficult! But you know that!

Raising rates to the level that you are proposing is catastrophic for some of our islanders. They are on low fixed incomes- you can look up how many are getting property tax reductions. These are the most vulnerable and most likely to be forced into some version of homelessness. Where can they go? Nowhere. There is already a homeless crisis- let's not exacerbate it!

There have to be more ways to charge people based on a number of factors. If you're moving to electronic payments, why not have a card that we can load, which would be scanned. Islanders who either own property or can show they rent property here (long term only) would get these cards and load an amount of money that they can afford. Then the amount needed whether it's peak or non peak, car or walk-on comes off.

Less well off people- such as those with reduced property taxes can receive reduced rates- it would be a simple thing to program.

My ideas also involve looking at ways to increase ridership at off hours. You can't price your way out of this problem. So many examples about supply and demand- it's shocking that your consultants didn't take any of this into account! A first year Econ student could figure that one out.

So, how about encouraging non-peak hour travel. As I said, bring back a later run just on Wednesdays or Thursdays at first and see how it goes. How about a two for one? Or simply lower rates after 6:45?

The best analogy I can think of for a perishable commodity like a ferry with limited capacity is the airlines. When demand is low, they reduce prices. They want to fill as many seats as possible. The ferry could take a page from that book!

Please don't ruin our special place in the way the draft was laid out. Guemes is still largely a middle class island. If we run off all the long-time residents, we may as well live in Bellevue.

Thank you for allowing all of our comments!

Beverly and Richard James  
7365 Guemes Place  
206-660-1447

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Bill Van Vlack <bill.van.vlack@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 4:41 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** 2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

*To: Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning*

*Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.*

*Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe*

*1800 Continental Place*

*Mount Vernon, WA. 98273*

*Re: SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION*

*2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE*

*From: Bill Van Vlack*

*5943 South Shore Road*

*Anacortes Wa. 98221*

Dear Commissioners, Director, and Captain:

I am opposed to the recommendation to raise Guemes Island Ferry fares by the extraordinary amounts KPFF proposed in their recent study; 70-100 percent fare increases on top of the surcharge most recently enacted seems ill-advised and unfair.

We learned that Public Works, in reaction to Skagit County budget cuts, has decided that their contribution from the Road Fund is too high and should be capped with the rest of O&M expenses covered by fare income. Are there any efforts on the part of the Commissioners or Skagit County management to reduce ferry operations expenses to achieve that same end?

On the contrary, we learned that an expensive consultant's study was commissioned to tell Public Works how fares should be calculated to reach the Public Works cap. It's not clear why this work required expensive outside expertise except that it seems to provide political cover for the Commissioners to rescind the present resolution, R20180123 and make a major change to the present fare/road fund equation. Doesn't the current ferry manager - who now has an assistant - have the ability and time to compute ticketing and fare formulas?

Perhaps Skagit County Public Works needs the help of the Guemes Island Ferry Committee to understand more clearly how to serve Guemes Island, but the County has been ignoring the provisions of the current resolution requiring that the County take regular input from the Guemes Island Ferry Committee regarding fares and expenses.

One item that could have been discussed is the addition of a toll booth, a recommendation by the consultants that might be appropriate for the Washington State ferries, but not for the small Guemes ferry. A staffed toll booth adds additional staff expense, and a ticketing machine for cars adds time to the loading process.

Some other points...

- Property taxes, hence islander's contributions to the Road Fund, has gone up substantially this year; perhaps disproportionately to the rest of the County given the Island's high property values in general.
- We have been told that the operations cost of the new ferry will be lower than the present one. Shouldn't any major change to the present fares and hence the operating ordinance be made after the new ferry is built and commissioned?
- Neither the Public Works staff nor the ferry manager/assistant have professional experience operating and maintaining a ferry - apart from what they're learning on the job; it's obvious that the Commissioners and Public Works staff consider the Guemes Island Ferry a nuisance and impediment from doing their 'real' jobs. Maybe it's time again to look for proposals from outside operators - with appropriate notice to the Inland Boatman's Union.

Sincerely,

Bill Van Vlack

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 12:36 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: ferry fares

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**From:** Bonita Smith <smithbonita04@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 12:17 PM  
**To:** Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:**

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Hello,

I live on Guemes island and have for 22 years.

I find it outrageous that you want to increase our ferry fare that much for the county's mismanagement of funds

I hope you will use some intelligence resolving this issue.

Thank you

Bonita

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Boshie Morris <boshie.m@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 4:57 PM  
**To:** Guemes Island Ferry Committee; commissioner@co.skagit.wa.us; Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry Fare Increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Boshie Morris -Guemes friend, resident at I Avenue and 7th Street Anacortes

Sadly, I have just learned of the plight of Guemes Islanders, in the midst of the current ferry shutdown for repairs.

Insult to injury.

This reworking of the fare schedule by the County's consultant seems to CHERRY PICK a few things from what I have researched on the Lummi Ferry site as well as some things from the Wa. State Ferry.

Curiously, BOTH of those allow CHILDREN to age 19 to ride FREE as passengers and as walk ons. If driving, naturally a 19 yr old pays for car and driver. NO such eligibility for Guemes youth, unless 5 or under.

The Wa. State ferry does have a 14' vehicle category, because ALL Wa. State ferries have toll collection booths with striping for length measure and extensive car waiting lots. Neither of which is applicable to the Guemes Ferry. The vehicle 14' or less category would include a VW bug-2011 or older (12 years old); subcompact cars like the Kia Rio, Kia Soul, Honda Fit, Chevy Bolt, Jeep Wrangler and Renegade, Mini Hardtop, Fiat Spider, BMW i 3 and a few other cars 2020 or newer. Not even the Toyota Matrix subcompact, nor 9 of the 15 SMALLEST SUV' s produced in 2019 qualify as 168" or less. Are new cars a thing on Guemes Island?

Interestingly, the Lummi Ferry rates are concerned with vehicle weight of <11,000 lbs- all vehicles that meet this criteria are the base rate. I can't even imagine how big a truck needs to be to exceed 11,000 lbs.

The Whatcom County criteria look pretty dissimilar in fares, tho both Guemes and Lummi Ferries have a run distance of about 5 minutes, and some similarities in # of daily runs except Lummi Ferry, on Saturdays and Sundays, have 18 trips each way with~ half what is provided on weekdays! I wonder if the DATA used by the consultants factored Lummi population or property values in the proposal before Commissioners?

Most disturbing is the disregard for time for open communication between Guemes Islanders, Anacortes mainlanders and the County over this radical proposal. The last time I witnessed this was at a Commissionners daytime meeting regarding the abrupt Guemes Ferry service extension to 10:30 p.m. daily some 15 years ago when we KNOW ridership was a fraction of what is borne today. THAT DATA FREE analysis was shameful- as is this MASSIVE Fare Increase to cover an extended shortfall that was not dealt with since 2018.

How could so many people be so blindsided and confused by such a proposal? I have read many thoughtful suggestions, and pleas from residents to take this down a notch, rethink adding a booth, (where- I guess would be in the middle of 6th Street) and attempt to lower this 70+% hike to something phased in over time, NOT fully at the apparent closure of 3 years of Covid hardships.

Respectfully submitted, Boshie Morris

Boshie Morris  
1618 7th St  
Anacortes, Wa. 98221  
360-299-1414



**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Brenda Griffin <brendakarina@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 30, 2023 5:55 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Subject:** Proposed Guemes island Ferry Fare Increases

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#####

Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner

Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner

Lisa Janiki, Skagit County Commissioner

1800 Continental Place, Suite 100  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

RE: Proposed Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increases

Dear County Commissioners:

By this time, I'm sure that I am one of many residents of Guemes Island who has written with concern about the proposed 71% increase in fares for the Guemes Island Ferry. As a single, middle-aged woman, I live month to month by working as a certified nursing assistant and caregiver to elderly, ill, or otherwise limited-ability residents of the island. I can only plan to reduce my ferry usage if such an increase does happen. I average 2-3 car and driver trips per week. With the fare increase in peak season, I would need to cut back my crossings to spend \$50 rather than \$75 per week; I will need that \$100 monthly to go to other bills. Because I have limited finances I cannot use the ferry with a frequency that the proposed budget projects residents will maintain; that's the bottom line for me.

Sincerely,  
Brenda Griffin

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** bcr443 <bcr443@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 6, 2023 5:35 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Ferry Fare Increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear County Commissioners:

My wife and I attended the 2023 Ferry Fare Increase Meeting on Tuesday, February 28, 2023 and we want to add our comments to those presented there.

When we retired in 2004, we choose to live on Guemes Island so that we would not have to deal with the Washington State Ferry System. How ironic that you hired those same people to propose new ferry fares. Let's see. A new class for cars under 14 feet. Extend standard car fares to 22 feet and increase the cost of ferry fares for full time residents to almost double.

Guemes Island has only one small restaurant/store to shop at. We are in effect a suburb of Anacortes. We need to go to town for food, medical appointments, hardware, restaurants and entertainment. We spend most of our disposable income and money for necessities in Skagit county. One of the KPFF presenters said that elasticity was not included in their study. Really, there is only so much money for middle class people to spend.

Last year we purchased 14 senior car and driver cards and 7 senior walk on cards for a total of \$2,506. Under the proposed fare increase and factoring in having to pay peak fares, the total yearly cost would be \$4,805. An increase of 91%, nearly double to what we are paying. Why have you penalized retired citizens of Skagit County so much? According to KPFF, this was done in the name of fairness. It doesn't look fair to me. And I predict it would not seem fair to you if you had to pay \$28 to go to coffee with your spouse or to go see the doctor. We shall, of course, have to go to Anacortes and Skagit County for necessary trips, but we will certainly curtail most of the others.

You have left us in the position of having to decide what to give up in order to continue our way of life on Guemes, or to move off the island. A huge property tax increase followed by this burdensome fare increase will designate that Guemes is another island like those in San Juan County for the rich and very rich.

I ask and hope that you can redo the 2023 Ferry Fare Increase so that it is fair and reasonable. We want to remain on Guemes Island and live in Skagit County.

Bruce Rooney

Sandra Lane

7844 S Beach Ln

Anacortes, WA 98221

bcr443@gmail.com

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Sent from my Galaxy

## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** bud ashbachlawoffices.com <bud@ashbachlawoffices.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023 12:42 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Proposed Guemes Ferry Rate Hikes

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Hopefully this email gets to you folks now; I may have left "us" off the earlier email to you.

Bud here

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**From:** bud ashbachlawoffices.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023 11:12 AM  
**To:** ronw@co.skagit; ronw@co.skagit.wa.us  
**Cc:** ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.; commissioners@co.skagit; commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us  
**Subject:** Proposed Guemes Ferry Rate Hikes

Dear Commissioner Wesen;

I write to you specifically, as you are the District #1 Representative on the County Board.

My connection to Guemes goes back to 1946; I know that through the years there has been quite a bit of inflation, almost everywhere. I'm sympathetic to ferry crew members needing a new contract, with better wages.

Twenty years ago my land taxes were like \$3,000 a year, now they are about \$10,000. These are general figures, but I'm told by the tax man that my place is now a lot more valuable, because of inflation, and other sales, even though I am not selling.

I watched how the County failed to secure new diesel engines for the current ferry, that were available (basically free) from Volkswagen. I watched how the ferry docks (on both sides of the channel) were modified with new spanning beams, where the installation of extra pillars under the old spans probably would have made the docks safe for twenty more years, with vastly less money spent. I am watching the efforts by the County to get an expensive electric ferry, where much money has been used in "studies" about the suitability going this new route, rather than having re-powered the ferry through Volkswagen's offer.

It looks like the docks and/or pilings may need reconfiguring if the electric ferry arrives; and it may not be now known whether power stations will be needed on both sides of the channel; or whether diesel generation of recharging power will be needed near the docks or on the new ferry.

It is not readily known that the electric ferry will be able to transport more vehicles and people for the crossings, than what we now have, daily. I'm not sure that Guemes is actually worth such an expensive ferry.

I watched the construction of the one-way road, by the County, through the newly inundated valley below Guemes Mountain. That project, which may even be ongoing, involves an enormous amount of money, but did little to improve the situation, which likely had a simple solution. I watched the County move the large pile of gravel from a convenient center-of-island location to a new spot near Clark Point. Moving that pile certainly was expensive and unneeded. The

pile was just moved, relocated. It could have been distributed over time. But this, like the road project through the damp valley, makes it look like the County is doing good things for Guemes, at big costs. Those costs were largely unnecessary. Those two projects involved more county equipment impacting our current ferry. Without any real gain.

What I'm saying is it is time to evaluate the worth of County expenditures. I'm told that a "study" was purchased, to address whether ferry fares should be upped.

The road fund taxes from Guemes properties ought to be used with the view of improving transportation. That mostly involves getting across the channel, both directions. That will keep property values up, which the County Assessor likes.

I know that under state law the "road fund taxes" may be invaded for purposes of government, that are quite beyond roads, bridges or transportation. I am asking you to make good sensible use of our local road taxes, for the transportation issue that is rather unique to Guemes.

I can envision what may well happen with an extremely large rate hike: more people will travel by foot, which will reduce revenue. And in Anacortes, you will see many extra blocks of parked vehicles, that may well be an annoyance for the city, and the good neighborhoods close to the ferry.

Maybe it is too late to rescue the ferry situation, because of the history that I have just described. I can accept a modest increase, but still am sorry that much money seems to have been spent where savings were clearly available.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bud Ashbach  
5538 Guemes Island Road  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
Cell 360-929-3319

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** bullman31971@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 10:38 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** comment on "subsidies"  
**Attachments:** subsidy.docx

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**“Subsidy”**

Please stop using the word “subsidy” to describe the Road Fund contribution to Skagit County Ferry operating costs. First, the word suggests the Fund is paying for something somebody else ought to be paying for or paying for something less deserving than other claims on the Fund.

Second, to the best of my knowledge in no other setting do we use “subsidy” to describe Road Fund expenditures. When we build a bridge we do not say the Road Fund is subsidizing the bridge; the Fund is simply paying for it. If the USDOT or FEMA pays for most of the bridge we do not say the County is subsidizing the United States or the bridge or the users of the bridge.

Third, the word and is baggage, being both invidious and pejorative, lead us to flawed outcomes. Take for example the proposed new fare methodology. Because the Road Fund “subsidy” is of lesser dignity than other “normal” Fund obligations, it can be “fixed” at \$750K. This protects the Fund from the vicissitudes of the real world where the ferry is concerned, while other Fund expenses must deal with uncertainties because they are viewed as fully legitimate expenses and not “subsidies.” Nowhere else, at least to my knowledge, do we think it appropriate to say, “On this item the Road Fund will spend \$X and no more; any further expenses must be covered by user fees.”

Of course the ferry has a unique relationship in Public Works’ management responsibilities. Accordingly, we have unique fees to help cover expenses and a unique program to share, between the Fare Box and the Road Fund, unanticipated expenses. But the relationship is not so unique that ANY Road Fund expenditure should be viewed as a subsidy rather than as a regular expense of maintaining the County transportation system.

Some years ago the Public Works then-Director Dan Berentson said the Department would move away from using “subsidy.” I can understand that the topic probably did not make it to the top of his To-Do list, but now its time has come.

Carl Ullman  
5162 West Shore Road

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Caution: Items on the calendar are closer than they appear.

### **Electric Ferry Battery Replacement Surprise**

One facet of the County's initial push for a new, electric, ferry was assuring fare payers that a new ferry would be less expensive to operate than the existing M/V Guemes. I believed the assurance and as a member then of the Guemes Island Ferry Committee I told my constituents about this advantage of the new electric ferry. Many were receptive.

Now, according to the Q&A section of the 2023 Fare Proposal web site, the reduction in operating cost "is not something we can count on any longer." This is a reversal of the previous assurances by the County and is an example of why the public is mistrustful of County assurances.

Worse, the Q&A explains that the initial cost assessment has changed in part because of "the need to plan for battery replacement every 10 years or so." Surely this expense was known from the beginning of electric-ferry planning. This is not unrelated to public attitudes regarding the County's recent work on the fare issue.

This reversal on fiscal efficiency represents the collapse of the main pillar supporting the electric ferry project. If for about \$20M we are not getting a less expensive operation, what ARE we doing? It is good to finally level with people, but the resulting skepticism owes a lot to the County's own expressions.

Carl Ullman

5162 West Shore Road

## **Proposed New Fare Methodology**

The current fare-setting methodology is flawed though it has its good points. But there are worse flaws and fewer good points in the new methodology being proposed. We do not need to be reinventing the proverbial wheel to achieve the announced goal of taking some pressure off the Road Fund.

The County says the present situation is not acceptable because it takes too big a bite out of the Road Fund. Instead of changing the methodology for the fare structure, the amount taken from the Road Fund could be easily changed by adjusting the current 65%/35% cost assignment in order to obtain the desired \$750K contribution from the Road Fund.

That would produce the result the County seeks without producing the following disadvantages:

*Burden of uncertainty solely to the Fare Box.* With the proposed new methodology there is a fixed amount for the Road Fund contribution to overall expenses and, thus, the entire risk of uncertainty falls on the Fare Box. This imbalance not a good idea.

It eliminates the incentive for the County to control expenses because the Fare Box, not the Road Fund, is solely exposed to cost overruns, insufficient anticipation of expenses, and unforeseen or neglected fiscal issues. This is inherent in the proposal despite the best intentions of County personnel.

Public Works has explained its admirable budget review and belt-tightening; however, there should not be the expectation that fare payers should absorb the costs of the new proposal's change in fiscal policy. More equitable and more feasible is the existing methodology that shares cost uncertainties, offering some reassurance to Fare Box customers that they are not alone in dealing with uncertainties that are sure to arise.

This is not a matter of the character or ability of our public servants. In the proposed new fare methodology the deck is unavoidably stacked against the Fare Box. It is appropriate for people to expect better.

*Not smoothing or averaging.* Ferry expenses vary from year to year. Under any system we are bound to "miss the target" of a fixed expense prediction. The current methodology uses a 5-year rolling average to avoid radical swings in its outcome that might otherwise result from unanticipated higher or lower expenses or income.

Looking at individual years' costs uninformed by the lived experience of other recent years is a recipe for jagged graphs and underinformed decisions. The new proposal's addition of half-a-haulout's expenses each year shows an awareness of this problem and the concept should be applied to other expenses as well. Some sort of smoothing is necessary; the new proposed methodology lacks that useful feature of the existing methodology.

In sum, the current fare methodology is not without its problems. But it can be adjusted to accommodate current needs, while the new proposal promises to be much more cumbersome and unsatisfactory.

Carl Ullman

5162 West Shore Road



**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Carol Pellett <cpellett95@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 6, 2023 4:39 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Ferry fares

#####  
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#####

I oppose this huge jump in ferry fares proposal. After much thought I will not be riding the ferry that much anymore. I will go once a week or every other week to town for groceries. This huge jump in cost will make it very difficult for many on fixed incomes or jobs that don't pay decent wages. I would walk on if I physically were able to do so easily. Young folks and retired folks will really be hurting. The revenue will not be coming in as you expect. I won't be the only one. I suspect more people will walk on which means far more people's cars in front of houses in Anacortes.  
Carol Pellett

Sent from my iPad

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Carol Steffy <islarts75@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 25, 2023 7:35 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments

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the day AFTER the ferry is pulled out is an odd time to schedule a meeting to present these findings to Guemians stuck on island without transportation isn't it?

Could you at least do a zoom mtg at the same time to communicate with the islanders involved with the decision?

Carol Steffy

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Carolyn Eastman <cbeastman@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 10:29 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; commisioners@co.skagit.wa.us  
**Cc:** guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** 2023 Guemes Ferry Rate Proposal

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To: Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning  
Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.  
Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA. 98273

Re: SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION  
2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

From: Carolyn Eastman  
7922 Saddlebag Lane  
Anacortes, WA 98221

Dear Commissioners, Director, and Captain:

There are several ways in which the proposed ferry rate increase will negatively impact my island community, my neighborhood, my household and me personally:

- With such unfathomably expensive ferry ticket costs, folks living full-time on the island who are raising children, are disabled, young, elderly or living on the margins financially may be faced with an insurmountable financial barrier to remaining on the island. As you well know, we do not have schools, medical facilities or grocery stores on the island and must use the ferry

service for these essentials. Small business owners, commuters and trades folks with larger vehicles will in some cases be priced out living on the island. This upheaval and rendering of the relationships and fabric of the community will be a loss for all of us here on Guemes.

- The ferry rate increase will encourage the conversion of properties to short-term rentals. Those who will opt to vacation on the island will continue to do so regardless of the ferry rate which will be wrapped into the cost of their vacation. When current residents who can no longer afford to stay move, the turnover in properties will undoubtedly increase the number of short-term rental properties and bring in more affluent property owners turning us into, for all practical purposes, an economically gated community. This will irreparably tear at the fabric of the community and threaten the richness of long-established relationships and cohesive neighborhoods. Additionally, the increase in vacation and short-term rental properties will put stress on our finite water system as vacationers will not have any incentive to be careful with their water consumption.
- My household will certainly reduce our use of the ferry choosing to forego dining in Anacortes, frequenting local businesses and attending community events. I estimate that my household will decrease its monthly vehicle and driver plus passenger ferry crossings from 10-12/ month to 3-5/ month to stay within our budget. As the second largest community in Skagit County, Anacortes is well served by the population of Guemes Island spending their dollars locally. Guemes Island year-round residents represent about 20% of the population of Anacortes so the change in our buying habits, relying more on Amazon and online purchases will be felt. That money vanishes from the local economy out of Anacortes and out of Skagit County.

My basic sense of fairness is challenged by the way the County has proceeded with addressing its need to finance other projects in Skagit County. I understand that costs generally increase over time and that modest ferry rate increases may be necessary from time to time. However, changing the road funds/ferry ticket formula will have a devastating effect on this unique part of Skagit County now and into the future. I leave it to other island community members to give you their input regarding the numbers and methodology used to create the rate proposal. They will undoubtedly touch on the huge property tax increases, the rate structure of other county-run ferry systems, what percentage of our taxes go to services that we use far less than those in other parts of Skagit County, etc. Perhaps the County should consider beefing up the road fund with some of the funds received through the increased property taxes.

Please consider how this proposed ferry rate increase will negatively impact the place we call home as you search for the right path forward.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Eastman

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:11 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: 2023 Guemes Ferry Rate Proposal

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**From:** Carolyn Eastman <cbeastman@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 2:46 PM  
**To:** Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:** 2023 Guemes Ferry Rate Proposal

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

**To:** Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning  
Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.  
Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA. 98273

**Re:** SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION  
2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

**From:** Carolyn Eastman  
7922 Saddlebag Lane  
Anacortes, WA 98221

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- The ferry rate increase will encourage the conversion of properties to short-term rentals. Those who will opt to vacation on the island will continue to do so regardless of the ferry rate which will be wrapped into the cost of their vacation. When current residents who can no longer afford to stay move, the turnover in properties will undoubtedly increase the number of short-term rental properties and bring in more affluent property owners turning us into, for all practical purposes, an economically gated community. This will irreparably tear at the fabric of the community and threaten the richness of long-established relationships and cohesive neighborhoods. Additionally, the increase in vacation and short-term rental properties will put stress on our finite water system as vacationers will not have any incentive to be careful with their water consumption.
- My household will certainly reduce our use of the ferry choosing to forego dining in Anacortes, frequenting local businesses and attending community events. I estimate that my household will decrease its monthly vehicle and driver plus passenger ferry crossings from 10-12/ month to 3-5/ month to stay within our budget. As the second largest community in Skagit County, Anacortes is well served by the population of Guemes Island spending their dollars locally. Guemes Island year-round residents represent about 20% of the population of Anacortes so the change in our buying habits, relying more on Amazon and online purchases will be felt. That money vanishes from the local economy out of Anacortes and out of Skagit County.

My basic sense of fairness is challenged by the way the County has proceeded with addressing its need to finance other projects in Skagit County. I understand that costs generally increase over time and that modest ferry rate increases may be necessary from time to time. However, changing the road funds/ferry ticket formula will have a devastating effect on this unique part of Skagit County now and into the future. I leave it to other island community members to give you their input regarding the numbers and methodology used to create the rate proposal. They will undoubtedly touch on the huge property tax increases, the rate structure of other county-run ferry systems, what percentage of our taxes go to services that we use far less than those in other parts of Skagit County, etc. Perhaps the County should consider beefing up the road fund with some of the funds received through the increased property taxes.

Please consider how this proposed ferry rate increase will negatively impact the place we call home as you search for the right path forward.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Eastman

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Carson Parks <carsonfp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 26, 2023 10:09 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry Fare Proposal

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Skagit County Commissioners & those who have interest,

As a lifelong Guemes Island Resident, I am writing to let you know my concern with the KPFF Ferry Rate Study & proposed increases.

As I read the numbers, it appears that KPFF has oversimplified the 'required farebox target' in all three proposed scenarios (65% Farebox, \$750K Road Fund, \$500K Road Fund)

KPFF Appears to have used solely the 2023 Guemes Island Ferry approved budget and 2022 actual revenue to base these proposed fare increases on.

If we go by the resolution (R20110382) that establishes a 65% fare recovery rate based on the previous five years, we should end up with a fare recovery equation such as this:

I am including 2022 figures based on the 2022 Skagit County Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report, rounded to the nearest thousand.

2018-2022 Five Year Adjusted O&M Average	\$2,229,000
2018-2022 Five Year Fare Box Revenue Average	\$1,181,000
As per the 65% fare recovery methodology, 2023 target revenue should be:	\$1,449,000
This difference (\$1,449,000 / \$1,181,000) = 22.6% shortfall in farebox revenue	

In short, raising the rates by 25~30% would be a much better number for many locals to face. While I understand the need to match fares to costs, the KPFF proposal of a 52% - 92% rate hike seems preposterous.

If the county is dead set on lowering the operating loss from the ferry operations via the road fund subsidy, it would be much easier on your constituents to provide for a resident account (say, your drivers license/ID matches a Guemes Island address) at a reduced rate compared to punch cards. Implementing this along with your direction towards digital ticketing would be easily accomplished.

In addition, many Guemes Island residents have seen their property tax swell 150~200% in the last few years (myself included) with year 2023 going up an extra 50% over 2022. This coupled with an extreme ferry ridership cost will absolutely hurt many residents.

Let us work together to find a solution that will lessen the burden for our community.

Thank you,

Carson Parks  
Guemes Island





## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 9:13 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Guemes Ferry Rate Proposals

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**From:** Carson Parks <carsonfp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 26, 2023 10:35 PM  
**To:** Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry Rate Proposals

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Skagit County Commissioners,

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Let us work together to find a solution that will lessen the burden for our community.

Thank you,

Carson Parks

Guemes Island

[carson@knotweld.com](mailto:carson@knotweld.com)

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 10:16 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: E-mail Confirmation: Skagit County Commissioners' Office

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**From:** Scott Parker <eaglewolf605@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 11:43 AM  
**To:** Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Re: E-mail Confirmation: Skagit County Commissioners' Office

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A Class action lawsuit against the county and Management is going to happen with the most recent news about the meeting. A proposed 71% Increase to our ferry fares is not acceptable.

Please consider using 5 years of documentation including: Profit and Loss, Balance sheets. COLI. We as guemians, could or will file the Class action against the county and the Management of mishandling revenues and distribution.

Inspired by recent news and others sharing their thoughts, I wrote a letter to the Skagit County Commissioners. I have decided to post the contents here. I encourage any of you who would like their opinion noted to look at the bottom of this post for email and meeting details.

Skagit County Commissioners & those who have interest,

As a lifelong Guemes Island Resident, I am writing to let you know my concern with the KPFF Ferry Rate Study & proposed increases.

As I read the numbers, it appears that KPFF has oversimplified the 'required farebox target' in all three proposed scenarios (65% Farebox, \$750K Road Fund, \$500K Road Fund)

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--	-------------

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This difference ( $\$1,449,000 / \$1,181,000$ ) = 22.6% shortfall in farebox revenue

In short, raising the rates by 25~30% would be a much better number for many locals to face. While I understand the need to match fares to costs, the KPFF proposal of a 52% - 92% rate hike seems preposterous.

If the county is dead set on lowering the operating loss from the ferry operations via the road fund subsidy, it would be much easier on your constituents to provide for a resident account (say, your drivers license/ID matches a Guemes Island address) at a reduced rate compared to punch cards. Implementing this along with your direction towards digital ticketing would be easily accomplished.

In addition, many Guemes Island residents have seen their property tax swell 150~200% in the last few years (myself included) with year 2023 going up an extra 50% over 2022. This coupled with an extreme ferry ridership cost will absolutely hurt many residents.

Let us work together to find a solution that will lessen the burden for our community.

Thank you,

Carson Parks  
Guemes Island

Send an email to:

[ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us)  
[commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us)

Or attend the public meeting in person:

(February 28th at 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room at 1800 Continental Place in Mount Vernon)

or via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting Room Information: <https://bit.ly/SkagitBoCCMtg>

Call-In: 1 (253) 215-8782 Meeting ID: 871 8000 1980 Passcode: 143573

\*edited to add another email address for the county commissioners  
Scott Parker

On Fri, Feb 24, 2023, 1:08 PM Commissioners <[commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us)> wrote:

Thank you for your e-mail, it has been received by the Skagit County Commissioners' Office.

\*\*\*This is a confirmation only, please do not reply to this message.\*\*\*

Skagit County Commissioners' Office  
1800 Continental Place, Suite 100  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
Telephone: (360) 416-1300  
Facsimile: (360) 336-9307

**Jennifer Rogers**

---

**From:** Cathy Schoenberg <cathyschoenberg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 6, 2023 10:57 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Ferry fare

#####  
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#####

I had a similar experience in 1990's on Pull and Be Damned Road on Swinomish Reservation. There was a real viable community, people who loved where they lived. Suddenly the rates of the leased land went radically higher and tore the community apart. I know it was different situation in many ways, but I feel the same. Priced out of my home.

On top of the issues of low income, I have to drive a family member to a clinic off island six days a week, that's two people , six days, how can I afford that? I can't possibly drive, even walking on is a big expense, which will require purchasing , maintaining, licensing, and insuring another vehicle and taking the chance that my other vehicle will be vandalized in town. There is no bus service on the Island so that is not an option.

It's just another case of pricing people out of their homes, making Skagit Valley an unaffordable place to live. More pressure on the county for subsidized housing , dealing with homelessness. You need to HELP keep their homes, not PUSH them out!

Cathy Schoenberg  
Guemes Island

Sent from my iPhone

## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** Cedar Petrick <cedar.petrick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 11:49 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** Commissioners  
**Subject:** Guemes Island Ferry Fare Rate Proposal

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear Skagit County Commissioners,

Thank you for your time reading and processing my comments.

I am a Guemes Island property owner and full time Guemes Resident. I am a Registered Nurse working at Island Health in both the Acute Care Unit and Intensive Care Unit. I am also a small business owner, wife and mother. I am concerned how the proposed ferry price increase will affect my family. Our property taxes increased by 50% this year. This along with all the other cost increases over the last year and a half are putting financial strain on our family. My wages have seen little to no increase to match all these new and rising costs.

As stated in the 2022-2032 Skagit County Strategic Plan, “we all agree, Skagit County is a unique and highly desirable place to live.” I grew up on Guemes Island and moved back to Skagit County with my family almost 7 years ago to raise my children in this beautiful and special area. Both my husband and I are valuable and contributive members of our community. And yet, I have never felt so “pushed-aside” and excluded as I do now.

To give you a personal look at the costs my family of 4 would be looking at if this extraordinary increase took place I have included the following: We currently purchase 25 use “punch cards” as frequent users/commuters on the Guemes Ferry. My husband and I each purchase 25-trip adult cards currently costing \$77 each. With proposed increases these would become \$91/\$112(peak) each. That is up to 106% increase, which even with cost of inflation is an extraordinary change in 1 years time. Our 20-trip vehicle pass would go from the current rate of \$196 to \$332/\$400(peak), which is 104% increase! We would be unable to continue to use

our vehicle at this rate- and yet I live on Guemes Island and work in Anacortes (and shop in Anacortes, shop in Burlington, and shop in Mt. Vernon regularly). Our children's passes currently cost \$46 each would change to \$91/\$112(peak); making going into town (especially during the peak season for summer school or camps/classes) an unreasonable cost. And just to be clear we have to purchase these passes MULTIPLE TIMES per year, as I currently use the ferry 4-6 times per week. Guemes Residents should not have to pay "peak" fares as we use the system year round and this is our home.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency of both budget and cost for the Guemes Ferry is of great concern. I was unable to attend the Public Hearing 2/28 due to my work schedule at the hospital. But I did watch the taping and reviewed the Guemes Island Ferry Fare Rate Study "draft for discussion." The 2023 Approved budget (literally 1 line of data) is ½ a million dollars out of line with the rolling budget over last 5 years. There is no discussion of other ways to cut or manage costs. The presentation and draft for discussion feels manipulation, unclear and likely exaggerated. This lack of transparency leads me to believe that Ferry Manager Rachel Rowe gave KPFF Consultants guidance to use inflated budget numbers. Commissioners, I do hope your discerning eyes have asked for a more honest review.

Please remember your publication of Skagit County's Strategic Plan's vision, mission and values; as this current proposal directly conflicts with these. Drastically increasing Guemes Fares- making residents pay with both increased taxes and increased transportation fares is not collaborative, equitable, financially sustainable, inclusive or diverse. So **please don't forget we are contributing Skagit County Community MEMBERS!**

Sincerely,

**Cedar Petrick**



## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** C <charmaine.johannes5819@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023 10:34 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry Fare Increase Comments

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Skagit County Commissioners, Guemes Ferry Manager Rachel Rowe, and Grace Kane, Public Works Director,

I would like to paraphrase a comment by Grace Kane that was recently published in the Skagit Valley Herald and GoAnacortes: "running the vessel (Guemes) should not keep coming at the expense of other public works priorities." This sounds like a serious budgeting/ management issue to me, and instead of attempting to pit residents of the whole of Skagit County against the residents of a small part of Skagit County (Guemes.) let's talk about how to solve the problem before making another huge budget mistake. Guemes Islanders pay taxes that support other county services just like everyone else! This proposal needs more time for consideration and more community input.

Before County Commissioners make their decision to raise Guemes ferry rates 70-104 percent, I respectfully request these considerations be noted:

- People WILL change ridership habits if rates go up unreasonably. Then, how does the county compensate for lack of revenue?
- If it comes to reducing and making changes in the ferry schedule, has the county considered how those changes will affect the revenue for the new ferry when it finally arrives?
- Penalizing bicycle riders with higher fares goes against the county's goals to be more ecological and mindful of Climate Change.
- It was stated that the new fares are comparable with other ferry systems in the State, but it was not noted that Guemes islanders have to leave the island for almost all services ie. medical, groceries, post office, etc. There are no services on Guemes. And that higher fares will negatively impact and discourage different vendors who bring services to the island like cement trucks, lumber trucks, UPS and FedEx, etc.
- The TICKET BOOTH is not a good idea because it means adding another employee to a shift, and where can a ticket booth be situated so that cars and walk-ons can access it equally?
- Simplify the new fare structure, and take a close look at the proposal for "needs based fares." which appears to cost more, not less.
- As Guemes residents change their ridership habits because of high fares, how does the county plan to accommodate the need for more parking on both the Anacortes side and Guemes side?
- The new proposal does not address Ferry crew issues at all!
- If it is true that the Guemes Ferry has had budget deficits since 2018, why haven't the county/ferry managers made incremental adjustments over the last 5 years?

Finally, I know I will use the ferry less if fares increase too much.

Respectfully,  
Charmaine Johannes, MEd  
Guemes resident of 40 years.

## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** C <charmaine.johannes5819@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023 10:45 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Guemes Fare Increase Comments

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Skagit County Commissioners, Guemes Ferry Manager Rachel Rowe, and Grace Kane, Public Works Director,

I would like to paraphrase a comment by Grace Kane that was recently published in the Skagit Valley Herald and GoAnacortes: "running the vessel (Guemes) should not keep coming at the expense of other public works priorities." This sounds like a serious budgeting/ management issue to me, and instead of attempting to pit residents of the whole of Skagit County against the residents of a small part of Skagit County (Guemes.) let's talk about how to solve the problem before making another huge budget mistake. Guemes Islanders pay taxes that support other county services just like everyone else! This proposal needs more time for consideration and more community input.

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- The new proposal does not address Ferry crew issues at all!
- If it is true that the Guemes Ferry has had budget deficits since 2018, why haven't the county/ferry managers made incremental adjustments over the last 5 years?

Finally, I know I will use the ferry less if fares increase too much.

Respectfully,  
Charmaine Johannes, MEd  
Guemes resident of 40 years.

## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** Chris Shuman <chris.shuman1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 2, 2023 7:03 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes Island ferry fare increase

#####

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As a resident of Guemes Island I would like to express my frustration with the proposed ferry fare increases. How could they take a 70% jump? My husband and I are retired this is too much.

I understand that cost to go up, but I hope you will reconsider the size of the increase.

Christine Shuman  
7609 Holiday Blvd.  
Guemes island.

Ron Wesen, Skagit County Commissioner  
Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner  
Lisa Janiki, Skagit County Commissioner  
1800 Continental Place Suite 100  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

RE: Proposed Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increases

Dear County Commissioners:

Recently the residents of Guemes Island were presented with KPFF's proposal that merges two entirely separate issues, one being the 2023 Ferry Fare Targets and the other being the Ferry Ticket Fare Methodology. Merging these two together completely ignores the processes outlined in the resolution, which was signed by one of you, and fails to provide an opportunity for fair and proper community input for either. But this proposal is not about being fair. The county's own FAQs clearly state your reason to significantly raise the rates is "to reduce the financial impact to the county road fund." Thank you for your honesty. Capping the county's contribution at the suggested \$750,000 a year, or any fixed dollar amount, is a very sneaky way to completely get the county off the hook to contribute to ANY additional operational or maintenance costs incurred by the ferry. It is also like giving a blank check to the ferry. If the ferry operations suddenly increase their spending for whatever reason, they can. We know this happens - like the ferry management creating a new position of an assistant that previously did not exist. I was unable to find anywhere how much this person is paid or how this position was approved. Another example is how KPFF was paid \$117,000 to create the study that we are addressing today. Was the Guemes Island Ferry Committee given an opportunity to see if they felt these were necessary costs? The reality is the islanders have no control over operational and maintenance expenses. NONE. If the county has a flat rate, what incentive does the county, who controls everything, have to keep costs down in the future - especially knowing they can simply continue to increase the fares?

Skagit County has a responsibility to maintain all of the roads throughout the county, including the road to Guemes, which is our ferry. Our road is the only county road that I am aware of that the users pay a toll to reach the other side. Currently there are about 800 people who rely on the Guemes Island Ferry as their only road to and from any services on a daily basis. So despite the residents of the island already contributing over 1.4 million dollars in tolls, a contribution to the county roads that no other part of the county has to pay, you want to take even more of the funding away. Director of Skagit County Public Works Grace Kane said in a recent interview that by diverting funds away from the ferry, it "would allow her to reallocate about \$862,000 a year from the ferry maintenance and improvements to the county's 850 miles of roads. This could help generate funding to fix a severely damaged culvert on Fonk Road." This is confusing to me since it appears FEMA is reimbursing the county for those repairs. While everyone can appreciate that there are needs for road repairs and projects throughout the county, very few of the projects I saw on the county's 6 year plan of road projects I feel would personally impact the daily lives of so many of citizens as radically raising the rates on the

Guemes Island ferry would. If the county views road funds as relevant only to the end users, perhaps they will divide the cost to repair the culvert on Fonk Road to the approximately 60 residents who live at the end of the road.

I read a 2021 Seattle Times article that said that the Washington State Department of Transportation spends 20% of their entire budget on the Washington State Ferry System. The entire Skagit County Road Budget for 2023 is over \$45 million. A \$1.4 million contribution to the ferry is only 3.14% of the entire road budget, a drop in the bucket compared to what the state contributes to its ferries. And while it is difficult to make an exact comparison between the Guemes and Lummi Island Ferries, Whatcom County contributes 45% of overall costs to the Lummi ferry, compared with Skagit County's current contribution of 35%. Now you are asking to only contribute about 15% and have a capped dollar amount? This really doesn't seem fair or reasonable to reduce an already comparatively low contribution to such an important part of our county roads.

This year, every person I have talked to had their property taxes increase 40-50%. This was already a heavy burden for many, especially when you lump that with inflation on food, every good and service, higher gas prices, higher energy prices, etc. The island culture is a beautiful blend of full time residents and part-time residents, retirees and school age kids, high income and low income residents. This increase will price out the low income and fixed income residents. In a time when homelessness is rampant, including in Skagit County, why would you deliberately choose to add another reason to make housing unaffordable?

We may disagree on many issues as to what is fair or unfair, especially when it comes to how to best allocate county funds. But I hope you will at the very least agree with me today that it is unfair to burden a small community with a cost that was previously shared throughout the entire county in a time when so many individuals are financially suffering. I would also encourage each of you if you haven't already, and also Grace Kane, to spend some time riding on the ferry and talking to the people of Guemes Island one on one to truly understand what this means before making any further recommendations.

Please consider putting a pause on changing the entire fare modeling process and utilize the process that is already in place to create rates that are fair and reasonable for your citizens at the end of the county road.

Sincerely,

Clndy Kamp

Cc: Grace Kane, Skagit County Director of Public Works  
Rachel Rowe, Ferry Operations Division Manager, Department of Public Works

**Jennifer Rogers**

---

**From:** Cindy Kamp <cemadkamp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 5, 2023 1:36 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes Island ferry insurance

#####  
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On the 2022 Guemes Island Ferry Expense Report, the Insurance category was charged \$572,868. The budgeted amount for 2022 was \$120,799 - \$452,069 over budget - 374% over budget. The explanation I received for this unexpected and unbudgeted expense was that it stemmed from Resolution #R20230020 on how to allocate insurance costs across different county departments.

From the information I received from my Skagit County public records request, in 2022, four cars in four separate occurrences sustained minor damage to their vehicles on the Guemes Island Ferry - each determined to be the responsibility of an action or inaction of a ferry worker. The grand total paid to the individuals for all four occurrences was \$5,366.93.

This \$5,366.93, somehow, turned into \$59,348.37 - which was 27.36% of an entire "fund." From there, it ballooned to \$448,878, which was added to the regular ferry insurance premium of \$123,990 for the grand total of \$572,868 charged to the ferry.

The 2023 Preliminary Budgeted Insurance Expense is \$124,423. My understanding is that as the Resolution stands, theoretically, if the ferry sustains even one claim for \$1.00 and no other department has a single claim, the entire \$1.4 million could be charged to the ferry.

The proposed new ferry model does not take into consideration a variance of \$1.4 million in looking ahead next year or the year after.

It is of concern to me that this \$448,990 was included as an expense for the following reasons:

- 1) This "expense" goes directly into the operation and maintenance expenses that are used in the ferry fare calculations.
- 2) If you removed this expense from the 2022 expenses, the Guemes Island Ferry would have been UNDER budget by \$395,704 - not over budget by \$53,173 as was stated on the 2023 Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report.

2022 Budget  
2022 O&M Expenditures (without the \$448,878) \$2,851,420  
Actual Expenses \$2,455,716  
Difference \$395,704

- 3) This artificially inflated actual expense was used in the Ferry Operations Report given to Washington State to determine the distributions of the Ferry Deficit Fund. It is not a regular operation expense to pay an exorbitant percentage of the overall insurance premium for the entire county. For example, just because the County Fair did not have any claims in 2022 doesn't mean it didn't benefit from having insurance. This could artificially benefit Skagit County, thus potentially taking dollars away from Whatcom and Pierce counties.

4) It concerns me that the additional \$448,878, an unprecedented and unexpected expense, was not even mentioned on the 2023 Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report. In fact, "the year 2022 was a typical year for ferry operations" was how the year was described. Is it a typical year to have a new expense that is 16% of the total \$2,904,594 O & M expenses?

In addition to my concerns regarding the additional unexpected 2022 expense and the consequences of it, I have further concerns regarding our annual insurance premiums. Not only have they increased 36% since 2018, (excluding the additional \$448,878 from 2022) (\$90,912 - \$123,990) they are significantly more expensive when looking at some comparable ferries - many which insure multiple ferries:

2023 Budgets

Whatcom County Ferry - \$85,134

Pierce County - \$38,000 (total for 2 ferries)

Casco Bay Island Transit ( KPFF used this ferry line in Guemes Island Ferry System 2023 Rate Study) - \$79,200 (total for 5 ferries)

Guemes Island Ferry's insurance is nearly \$39,000 more annually than Whatcom County ferry. In my search to further understand why our insurance premiums are significantly higher for our ferry - even higher when compared to multiple ferry systems - I have asked who our ferry is insured through. Despite requesting this information through a public records request and a phone message to Risk Management, I have not received an answer to this question. What I did learn was that the Washington County Risk Pool (WCRP), which insures Skagit County, does not insure ferries. So my question of who is the insurer of the ferry still has not been answered, and creates even more questions as to how the ferry was charged for \$448,878 from the overall county insurance if it isn't even included in that fund.

My hope in writing all of this to you today is you will take the time to look further into the cause and effect of Resolution # R20230020 and make the necessary changes to prevent this misallocation of funds from happening in the future. Also, please consider adjusting the expenses from 2022 that are being used in ferry fare calculations. And finally, please look into our actual insurance premiums to try and reduce expenses.

Over the past few months there have been many conversations regarding how to increase the ferry fares. At the same time, we have gone from Public Works Director Grace Kane thanking Ferry Captain Rachel Rowe for her efforts to slash \$200k from her budget at the beginning of this year to not only adding the \$200K back in, but looking ahead for expenses to be around \$4 million in 2 years - about \$800K more a year. The proposed model creates the opportunity for operational expenses to continue to balloon without an incentive to control costs. We have no idea where we are going to be in 2 years with the new ferry. Please focus on fixing the issues we currently have, keep the existing ferry fare model, and reevaluate when we have the new ferry operational.

Sincerely,

Cindy Kamp  
Guemes Island Homeowner




## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** Cindy Kamp <cemadkamp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 8, 2023 9:54 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes Island Ferry Fares and Fare Model

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Skagit County Posted on Skagit Breaking on Facebook the following:

**Skagit County, Washington - Government**  · **Follow**  
May 12 ·   
**Skagit County is nearing the completion of a ferry fare rate study for the Guemes Island Ferry. Since 2018, farebox revenue has not met the revenue target, and the County has not pursued an increase in fares for operational costs since 2015. The County has undertaken this project to ensure the current level of ferry service and to be proactive in addressing financial impacts to the County's Road Fund.**

Skagit County is acknowledging here they have not pursued an increase in operational costs since 2015. What is missing in this statement is there was a fare increase, called a surcharge, implemented in 2018 for future capital expenses.

To ignore this is like the state of Washington adding a dollar gas tax which raises your fuel price from \$4/gallon to \$5/gallon and telling you to just ignore that extra dollar. - that you are really only paid \$4/gallon. Skagit County knows we had a fare increase in 2018. It's disingenuous to negate the increase by where the funds are going.

Why hasn't the county pursued a rate increase since 2018 - not 2015?



Public works recognized in their 2019 Ferry fare target report that the 2018 fuel surcharge - the rate increase - would have an effect on ridership or (elasticity).

The Public Works 2019 Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report states, "The implementation of the vessel replacement surcharge was a fare increase to the customer that's likely caused a shift in ridership patterns. Whenever fares increase, it can take some time for ticket sales to level out and ridership patterns to return to normal. Therefore the Public Works Department doesn't recommend a general fare increase at this time." At least at the time this report was written in 2020, Public Works acknowledged the vessel replacement surcharge was in fact a rate increase and understood it would have an effect on ridership.

The Public Works 2020 Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report concluded by stating, "The Public Works department plans to hold a future public comment period for the recommended fare increase and proposed fare structure." Yet this never happened and no fare increase was proposed.

The 2021 report also recommended a fare increase but nothing happened until late in 2022 when Public Works submitted an RFQ to hire a consultant to help make this happen instead of using the current fare model to determine a fair rate increase.

What other factors affected ridership besides the 2018 fare increase that wasn't mentioned in Skagit County's press release? Covid 19. Throughout the pandemic, ridership/revenue was greatly affected as we were all told to stay home. Every ferry that I have researched received large amounts of federal funds to offset their losses during covid - for some inexplicable reason, the Guemes Island Ferry did not.

In addition to the 2018 rate increase and Covid, I found one study that showed that inflation alone, in the absence of a rate increase, has an effect on ridership. I am guessing but I would think that KPFF knows this too. Our nation has suffered historic inflation since November of 2020 and people have had to make choices in how they spend their money.

The KPFF study remarks on fare elasticity throughout - yet they never actually provided numbers in the study to demonstrate how much their proposal for a five year fare increase would have. KPFF does have all the ridership data as well as past surveys to provide an estimate for what to expect in terms of lost ridership/revenue. According to the 2023 Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report, ridership has never recovered since the 2018 fare increase.

At the end of the day, there have been four big factors that have affected ridership and revenue - the 2018 fare increase, Covid 19, Inflation and not implementing a fare increase in recent years.

Failing to increase fares over the past few years isn't a failure of the current ferry fare model - it is a failure of those administering it.

The current model works and does not require a blank check to KPFF for years to come to calculate it. Please use the current model in place until we get the new ferry and have an opportunity to determine what the actual expenses and future costs of it will be.

Cindy Kamp  
Guemes Island Homeowner

## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** Clay Wallace <claywallace@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 7, 2023 12:02 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Proposed Guemes Island Ferry Fare Structure

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To Whom It May Concern,

I have reviewed the Guemes Island Ferry 2023 proposed fare structure and the current fare structure and present the following comments for your consideration.

- I concur with the elimination of some fare categories.
- I concur with the addition of the new fare categories.
- I understand the need for fare increases and the indicated rationale for the proposed increases but I think the percentage increases in general are excessive, particularly for the regular vehicle category – vehicles 22 feet or less in length. This category likely affects the most number of typical ferry users including islanders. I also do not agree with the 22 foot vehicle length change, preferring the current 20 foot vehicle length - see below.
- As to vehicle length changes I'll point out that vehicle manufacturers continue to increase vehicles size including length and the buying public continues to prefer larger vehicles (SUVs and pickups). There should be cost associated for this and reflected in the ferry fare structure.
- After doing some quick research, I believe there are less than 30 late (2020 – 2023) and some older vehicle models that are 14 feet or less in length. Most typical vehicle lengths are longer than 14 feet. I understand that a length must be established or set. I would strongly suggest the proposed 14 foot fare length be increased slightly to 15 feet. This would capture the more typical and average vehicle lengths driven by people today and not penalize them fare-wise for driving a typical average length vehicle.
- I think oversized vehicles (longer than 22 feet) fares should be increased much more than proposed, and regular vehicles (22 feet or less in length) should be less, not increased as much as proposed. I don't know what the fare for vehicles 22 feet or less in length should be but perhaps about half of the proposed increase seems reasonable to me. Conversely, the oversized vehicle category fares would then be proportionally increased for each vehicle length bracket. In my opinion, the 22 foot to 30 foot vehicle length bracket as well as the much longer oversized vehicle category should carry more of the fare structure increase.
- I also think the proposed 22 foot long vehicle change from the current 20 foot length is too generous for the fare category. A standard parking lot space is 18 to 20 feet in length. The typical house garage is about 19 feet deep inside, although newer homes may have slightly deeper garages some 22 to 23 feet deep. I would strongly suggest the proposed 22 foot fare length be reduced and kept at the current 20 foot length. Almost all standard passenger vehicles will be less than 20 feet in length including small SUVs. I realize that vehicles longer than 20 feet would be considered oversized but I think that is what they are - oversized. Longer vehicles including SUVs, pickups, and small RVs impact the number of vehicles that can be accommodated on a ferry run and also increase the waiting line length. These long oversized vehicles should pay a higher fare as a result, same as the much larger commercial vehicles will do based on their vehicle length.
- I concur with the condensed oversized vehicle fare changes into 10-foot categories.
- For oversized vehicles, I think each 10 foot over 60 feet fare amount such be higher than proposed, perhaps double the proposed amount.
- I concur with the standardized discount amounts on base fare (excluding capital surcharge) for multi-ride passes.

Regards,

Clay Wallace  
Guemes Island Property Owner

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Cleo Bouffiou <cleartheair@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 11:45 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Fw: Proposed Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increases

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(This letter is a repeat sent to individual county commissioners )

Proposed Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increases Dear County Commissioners:

Dear County Commissioners:

Below is a letter to you from David Wertheimer and Paul Beudet two people I hold in high esteem. They are well known in our community for their intelligence, integrity and good old common sense.

I am sure your have been copied several times with the following letter. So I would like to add how devastating this action by the county can affect our small community that has no other options on how to get to town and work.

For me personally it will be the difference of the ability to get to town or putting food on my table. I am 77 on a fixed income that is not growing but the cost of living is sky rocketing. What this means is my neighbors and I are forced to tighten our belts and find ways to get buy. It seems to me the county should take a page from our books and meet us halfway; remembering the consultants are not boxed in as we are. From my perspective they have no clue how they are affecting this community by going by a very narrow set of numbers that has nothing to do with supporting the people who pay them. Or valuing people over numbers. Respectfully, Cleo Bouffiou Guemes Island full time resident.

Dear County Commissioners: We are writing to express our concern about the proposed 71% increase in fares for the Guemes Island Ferry. We have lived on the island since 1998 and been full time residents since 2019. We value and appreciate the ferry, and its crew. As frequent ferry passengers, we are aware of how many island residents ride the ferry daily to get to and from their jobs, and/or shop in Anacortes, Mount Vernon, and other locations in Skagit County. The Ferry is the only way to get to and from the island; residents can't choose an option that costs less. The structure of the fare increases currently under consideration create the risk of making island residency too expensive for working families who commute, and those of more limited means who must run errands on the mainland. The island community should continue to be a place where people of all income levels can make their home. We would encourage the County to look for other solutions. At the very least, it needs to better understand the problem it is trying to solve. And a better understanding of its budget. The Skagit Valley Herald reported “\*This year, the county expects to send \$1.4 million in road fund revenue — about 10% of the road fund’s budget — to subsidize the costs of running the ferry, said Rachel Rowe, who heads the county’s ferry division.\*” Ms. Rowe appears to be in error, by a wide margin. The road fund budget in 2023 is \$32,808,795. \$1.4 million is slightly more than 4% of the roads budget. The Herald article also reports that County Public Works Director Grace Kane said the diversion of funds from the ferry this “\*would allow her to reallocate about \$862,000 a year from the ferry to maintenance and improvements to the county’s 850 miles of roads. This could help generate funding to fix a severely damaged culvert on Fink Road, she said at a meeting Thursday introducing the plan to county officials ahead of a public meeting next week.\*” If additional funding was needed for projects like this, why did the County previously forgo tax revenue that could have funded them? The County’s budget memo says: “\*The Road Fund budget includes

revenue of \$1,469,562 that was not levied in prior years and could have been.\*” Perhaps if the County had deployed all of the funding it had available, other road priorities would have been completed years ago.

According to the county budget posted

[online](<https://www.skagitcounty.net/BudgetFinance/Documents/2023Budget/2023%20Non-General%20Fund%20Expense.pdf?ver=2>The), the 2022 road fund expense budget as modified was \$36,238,546. The 2023 preliminary expense budget for roads is \$4 million \*less\* than the budget in 2022.

Perhaps if this year’s budget matched last year’s, there would be funding both to maintain the commitment to the Guemes Island community, and fund other County road priorities. Before approving a massive fare increase, we would request that the County explore all of the following options:

- Alternative fare structures that significantly reduce costs for working families, and those of more limited means;
- Reduce operating costs;
- Increase property taxes to more adequately fund all County road priorities, including the ferry operations, and have all County residents share the burden.

Taking these steps would help to ensure that the island remains affordable and accessible to everyone, including those who have lived here for many years and would find increased fares present them with an undue financial hardship. Thank you for considering this request, and these alternatives to blanket increases to the fares for the Guemes Island Ferry. Sincerely, Paul Beaudet & David Wertheimer

Cc: Grace Kane, Skagit County Director of Public Works  
Rachel Rowe, Ferry Operations Division Manager, Department of Public Works

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Clyde Petersen <clyde@yourheartbreaks.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 10:22 PM  
**To:** Commissioners  
**Cc:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Ferry Rates to Guemes Island

#####  
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#####

Hello Commissioners,

First of all, I deeply support the ferry workers getting a raise. They work so hard to keep that ferry running.

Secondly, I am concerned about the proposal to increase the ferry rates to Guemes Island and am writing to urge you to keep the ferry rates affordable.

As a low-income resident, this will deeply impact my ability to come and go from the island.

I live and work on Guemes Island but I come to Anacortes to buy food and supplies and run errands several times a month.

I know it is a privilege to live on an island paradise, but I am also a disabled person that currently subsists on minimum wage and food stamps.

Please consider having a low-income ferry pass available in addition to keeping the rates reasonable.

Thank you,  
Clyde Petersen  
Guemes Island

Clyde Petersen  
clyde@yourheartbreaks.com  
www.clydepetersen.com  
+1 (206) 419-5658

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Connie Cantrell <CAC.76@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 31, 2023 11:36 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Proposed Guemes ferry fare increases

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The proposed Guemes Island ferry fare increases seem to discriminate against senior citizens and long term residents. My husband and I currently own and live on land on Guemes Island that originally belonged to his grandparents. When my husband and I moved onto Guemes Island in 1995, we would never have imagined that the ferry prices would increase to a level that might force us to move off the island. We are retired. We are on a fixed income. The senior discount is not adequate.

It currently is necessary to leave the island almost on a daily basis for my husband's care. It is not inconceivable that if the proposed ferry fare increases go into effect, we will have to move off the island and leave our home and our friends who are also our support group.

Connie Cantrell

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



**Jennifer Rogers**

---

**From:** dolphinquest1 <dolphinquest1@runbox.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 26, 2023 11:29 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** farry fare hike

#####  
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#####

To: Ron Wesen, Peter Browning, and Lisa Janicki Thanks for your service to the county!

I feel it isn't fair to expect full-time residents of Guemes Island to afford this sudden price spike. The county should offer reduced tickets to full-time residents, at the least.

Thank you  
Craig Archambault, retired  
7695 Holiday Blvd  
Guemes Island (Anacortes postal zone)

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 9:08 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Guemes ferry fare hike

-----Original Message-----

From: dolphinquest1 <dolphinquest1@runbox.com>  
Sent: Sunday, February 26, 2023 9:19 AM  
To: Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
Subject: Guemes ferry fare hike

#####

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#####

To: Ron Wesen, Peter Browning, and Lisa Janicki Thanks for your service to the county!

I feel it isn't fair to expect full-time residents of Guemes Island to afford this sudden price spike. The county should offer reduced tickets to full-time residents, at the least.

Thank you  
Craig Archambault  
7695 Holiday Blvd  
Guemes Island (Anacortes postal zone)

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** D Strathman <strathmeister@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 4:02 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Subject:** Guemes Island proposed ferry fare increases

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Short and sweet..... for the record.

The proposed Guemes Island ferry fare increases are astronomically ridiculous!!

The burden of the proposed fare increases targets frequent riders e.g. Guemes Island residents (in all fare categories) – just the opposite of a fair fare system. Islanders just saw our property taxes go up significantly. And part of those taxes goes to the County Road Fund so we're already paying more for the ferry (part of the County road system). The proposed % increases across all fare categories need to be re-evaluated based on residency status. **Frequent riders (island residents) should get a SIGNIFICANT break/discount, non-Guemes County residents should catch a break of some sort, and vacationers/tourists/non-County residents (who don't otherwise pay for the roads) should pay a SIGNIFICANT premium** – makes so much sense! A fair fare system - hard to argue with that.

Thank you for your consideration.

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** dsturgill@outlook.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 17, 2023 12:42 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners; guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Proposed Ferry Fares

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Rachel Rowe Ferry Operations Manager  
Grace Kane Public Works Director  
Ron Wesen Board of Skagit County Commissioners  
Lisa Janicki Board of Skagit County Commissioners  
Peter Browning Board of Skagit County Commissioners

Stated in your Guemes Island Ferry Fare Proposal Public Hearing Scheduled for June 8 “this rate study has been a heavy lift for Public Works staff”. You might want to state the obvious that Skagit County Public Works (without any Guemes Island Ferry Committee representatives) hired the same consultant that WA State utilized to establish it’s Ferry rate schedule (almost word for word).

Then you charged the Guemes Island Farebox fund over \$110K to pay for this heavy lift again without any input from our duly elected Guemes Island Ferry Committee (GIFC). Then during the 2023 BCC Work Session with Public Works Guemes Island Ferry Rate Study Monday, April 17, 2023; 3:00 p.m. Grace Kane with the GIFC not 4 feet behind her claimed she didn’t recognize GICA as an elected body representing Guemes Island.

Shame on Skagit County Public Works for not standing up for the legitimacy of the Guemes Island Ferry Committee other than Commissioner Ron Wesen who acknowledged their standing.

Please take a very seriously look at the huge negative years-long effect these fare rate increases (without GICA input) will have on the greater population of Guemes Island.

- Arbitrary 65% Farebox recovery Target (Why not 50% since we get literally no on Island Police or fire protection)
- Annual 14% passenger and regular sized vehicles fare types increases through 2028 (this is a 92.5% fare increase...due the math)
- 2023 Farebox accounting...(questionable charge of \$500k for Ferry Insurance claims(?) and \$110K for KFPP(?)) Where’s the transparency?
- Where are the COVID relief funds received by the County? Were they applied for by Public Works for the Guemes Island Ferry lost Fare revenue?
- Why the 14 ft vehicle category? Is this going to have a new punch card? More work for the Purser.
- The bike fee for non-residents only! It should be covered/waved by a resident with a passenger/walk-on punch card!

Thanks,  
Dan Sturgill  
Guemes Island  
7034 Channel View Drive, Anacortes, WA  
206.852.9833

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Daniel Makus <11objuan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 12:26 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** Commissioners  
**Subject:** Guemes ferry rate increase

#####  
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#####

To the county Commissioners,  
My name is Daniel Makus, and I'm a registered voter, residing on Guemes Island.  
I'm also blind. I've not heard of what the new rate is to be for individuals with disabilities. In addition, the new proposed rate would be a large financial hardship for me, as when I have to go off island, I have to hire a driver. The new rate will impact me greatly and will limit my ability to get to doctor appointments, shopping, and any/all off island activities. I live on a fixed income, which is below the current poverty income level associated to Washington State income levels.

From what I understand of the current Guemes Island ferry budget, we current property tax payers pay more than enough to maintain the ferry budget. I understand that we are in an inflationary time, however, the proposed rate increase is well beyond in keeping up with inflation percentages.

As a registered voter on Guemes Island, I will be keeping apprised of how and who continues with this exorbitant rate increase.

Thank you for reading my concerns of the Guemes Island ferry rate hike, and just some of the difficulties the proposed rate will impact my current situation and quality of life.

Daniel S. Makus

Helping Horses, 'best as I can'

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Daniel Sturgill <dssturgill1@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 2, 2023 8:13 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Fwd: Skagit County proposal includes 71% increase to Guemes Ferry ticket prices | Revenue | goskagit.com

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**From:** Daniel Sturgill <dssturgill1@icloud.com>  
**Date:** March 1, 2023 at 8:57:32 AM MST  
**To:** Rachel Rowe <rrowe@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Skagit County proposal includes 71% increase to Guemes Ferry ticket prices | Revenue | goskagit.com

Rachel,

I'll like to offer the same option/proposal as I did during the recent Ferry meeting: The County needs to designate Guemes Island a Ferry District. This would place the burden of Ferry O/M on all Guemes Island Land Owners not just the Residents. As an example if the County assessed each parcel \$1 or \$2 per \$1,000 of first \$40,000 of value (\$40-\$80/year) the County would then have a ANNUAL base fund for budgeting.

Yes as a multiple Parcel owner I'd pay a bit more \$80-\$160/year. But the point is if you chose to live or own property on Guemes YOU ABSOLUTELY know it requires a FERRY ride to access your property.

I would suggest this option would be a more equitable solution than the consultants proposed large fare increase with potential future increases to follow. In addition the County might opt to continue to offer land owners/residents a discounted multi-trip ticket option similar to that currently offered.

Thx  
Daniel Sturgill  
206.852.9833

[https://www.goskagit.com/townnews/revenue/skagit-county-proposal-includes-71-increase-to-guemes-ferry-ticket-prices/article\\_6f32a6de-b3bd-11ed-a7c1-8307d6ba9d4d.html](https://www.goskagit.com/townnews/revenue/skagit-county-proposal-includes-71-increase-to-guemes-ferry-ticket-prices/article_6f32a6de-b3bd-11ed-a7c1-8307d6ba9d4d.html)

Sent from my iPhone

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Daniel Sturgill <dssturgill1@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 12, 2023 9:09 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Proposed Ferry fares

#####  
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#####

These proposed Ferry Fares gouge the exiting residents to the point of extortion! The County needs to totally rethink their funding plan.

You're taking extreme advantage of a small group of residential land owners that have no recourse or options to continue to live on Guemes Island.

Please reconsider the proposed option that designates Guemes Island as a Ferry District and tax each individual parcel equally on an annual basis for up to 50% of the estimated Ferry System's annual operations budget. As the County knows all landowners on Guemes Island understand that they must use a Ferry to travel to and from Guemes Island.

DON'T TAKE ADVANTAGE AND PROPOSE EXTREME AN UNREALISTIC FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS ON THOSE WHO CURRENTLY LIVE ON GUEMES ISLAND!!! PLEASE THINK BIG PICTURE!!!  
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Daniel Sturgill](#)  
To: [Ferry Comments](#)  
Subject: Proposed Ferry fares  
Date: Thursday, March 16, 2023 8:45:30 AM

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**From:** Daniel Sturgill  
<dssturgill1@icloud.com>  
**Date:** March 12, 2023 at 9:09:01 AM MST  
**To:** ferrycomments@co.skagit.wa.us  
**Subject: Proposed Ferry fares**

These proposed Ferry Fares gouge the exiting residents to the point of extortion! The County needs to totally rethink their funding plan.

You're taking extreme advantage of a small group of residential land owners that have no recourse or options to continue to live on Guemes Island.

Please reconsider the proposed option that designates Guemes Island as a



Ferry District and tax each individual parcel equally on an annual basis for up to 50% of the estimated Ferry System's annual operations budget.

As the County knows all landowners on Guemes Island understand that they must use a Ferry to travel to and from Guemes Island.

DON'T TAKE  
ADVANTAGE  
AND PROPOSE  
EXTREME AN  
UNREALISTIC  
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THOSE WHO  
CURRENTLY  
LIVE ON  
GUEMES  
ISLAND!!!

PLEASE THINK  
BIG PICTURE!!!

Sent from my  
iPhone

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Darcy Riggins-Schmidt <riggins\_schmidt@me.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 2, 2023 7:57 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Ferry rates

#####  
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#####

I would like To express my deep concern and frustration over the proposed ferry rate increase.

One of the explanations I have read is that the ferry rates have not been increased at the amount that they should have been over the years. That does not seem like a justifiable excuse to raise them so exorbitantly at one time.

I also read that funds need to be allocated to different parts of the county for repairs that need to be done on roads. But again why can't these cost be more evenly distributed across the entire county. Otherwise people who live or on property on Guemes Island or just want to visit it are being extremely unfairly penalized based on their location.

Some people have said that because we choose to live on an island we should have to pay extra to maintain that ferry. But the same argument could be made for people who live in an area that requires a bridge to access. Why don't those bridges have tolls? Or roads that require a lot of maintenance have tolls?

I also understand that Guemes Island property taxes bring in a proportionately higher amount than the majority of other Skagit county properties. So that would seem to reason that we are already paying a larger amount.

This exorbitant rate increase in one year is not justifiable. I urge you to please reconsider and change this proposal to some thing more gradual that is done over the course of several years.

Thank you for your time.

Darcy Riggins-Schmidt

Sent from my iPhone

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** davidknutson@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Monday, January 9, 2023 1:55 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Time Limit for car and passenger tickets

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Hello:

Thanks for the public information you provide on the ferry fare process. The public information and transparent process is greatly appreciated.

I have a family cabin on Guemes Island and would appreciate consideration of extending the time limit on ferry passes to one or two years, from the current shorter time lines.

During the Pandemic ferry passes were sold that did not expire. That worked very well for me and my family as we typically stay at Guemes between May and September, but only come infrequently during the rest of the year.

It would be similar to the US Postal Service "forever" stamps you can purchase at the Post Office.

Thank you for considering my request.

David Knutson  
Knutson Consulting  
360-970-9660  
davidknutson@comcast.net

## Comments 2023 Fare Rate Study

David Prewitt

The first question to answer is the appropriate funding amount for Skagit County residents to put toward the Guemes Island ferry operation. The proposed \$750,000 cap methodology would mean Skagit County would contribute only 20% on average to the operational and maintenance costs associated with delivering the Guemes Island ferry service. When compared to the current commitment by the County of 35%, or the Whatcom and Pierce County contributions of 44% and 45%, respectively, this model is an outlier. Additionally, the application of the model to a single high-cost year, i.e., one with a haul-out, to determine farebox shortfall and the resulting rate increase is impractical. Finally, to ensure an equitable and sustainable ferry service, the proposed fare structure should reflect the needs of different ferry user segments.

### Considering the Benefits of the Guemes Island ferry service

In determining an appropriate county funding commitment, a balanced review should consider benefits in addition to costs. Below, these benefits and their economic impacts are outlined.

The county-wide economic return on the investment Skagit County residents currently make in the Guemes Island ferry service far exceeds the invested dollars. This effect is clear in the property tax data presented below.

- **Property taxes**

- Guemes Island produces less than 1% of the demand for county services by population while contributing approximately 3% of county property tax revenue.

**Property Taxes and demand for services by population Skagit county as a whole and Guemes Island compared**

	Skagit County	Guemes Island	Guemes % of total
Real estate valuation	\$21,157,521,076	\$605,785,292	2.86%
Population 2020 Census*	129,523	900	0.69%
How much more Guemes Island contributes to the tax base of the county than its population represent			412.06%

\*2020 Census Tract 9501 less 48 to allow for Sinclair and Cypress Island populations

- Tax valuation of Guemes Island properties is directly linked to ferry service. For example, if without ferry access, property values declined by just 40%, island property tax contributions to Skagit County would decrease by \$2,380,130 annually from a current value of \$5,950,326.

Additional benefits of the ferry service:

- **Direct wages:** Nearly one million dollars in wages are earned each year by local county employees who staff the service, and these dollars by and large go straight back into the county economy.
- **Indirect wages paid through County contracts:** This year over one million dollars is scheduled to be spent on the haul-out and associated maintenance at Dakota Creek in Anacortes putting those dollars from the ferry operation directly back into the local economy.

- **Employment opportunities:** Home builders, plumbers, electricians, landscapers, etc. On island construction projects alone inject millions of dollars annually into the local economy in both wages and materials purchases.
- **Consumer spending:** Residents and non-residents alike make their purchases at mainland county businesses due to the fact that there are no retail outlets of any consequence on the island. All food, clothing, appliances, haircuts, car washes, medical services, etc. purchases put money in the hands of local business owners and, by extension, their employees.

A UK study on the economic impact of “Lifeline” ferries (those that offer the only means of access for the community served) found that,

“[While] of course there are other costs to the state in maintaining services for the islands, from a transport perspective, the economic benefits are at least ten times the costs.”<sup>1</sup>

Clearly a ferry service can offer many economic benefits to the regional economy that surrounds it. Costs, of course, must also be considered.

### **Considering the costs of the Guemes Island ferry service**

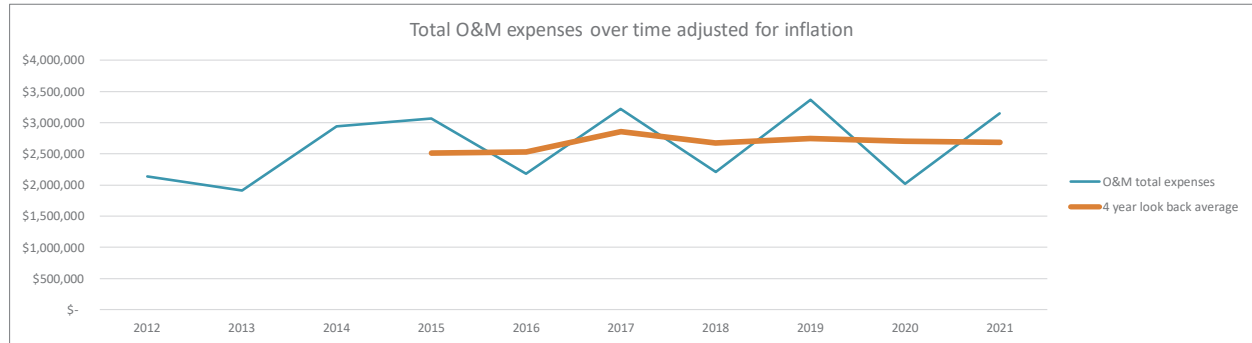
Adjusted for inflation, average costs of the ferry service are not significantly increasing. The table and graph below cover the last ten years of operational and maintenance expenses, inflation adjusted for comparison into 2021 dollars, associated with providing the Guemes Island ferry service. What is most notable is that when adjusted for inflation and using a 4-year look-back to smooth out peaks between haul-out and non-haul-out years the operations and maintenance expenses have remained more or less constant, averaging \$2,683,232 in 2021 dollars.

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<sup>1</sup> Jarvis, Tony. "Beyond Lifeline Services: How investing in transport can unlock the economic potential of peripheral areas." Highlands and Islands Enterprises. [https://www.starconference.org.uk/star/2006/Tony\\_Jarvis.pdf](https://www.starconference.org.uk/star/2006/Tony_Jarvis.pdf)

**Guemes Island Ferry (Adjusted for inflation using 2021 dollars)**  
**Expenses over time after adjustment for inflation**

Year	O&M total expenses	4 year look back average	Variance from 10 year average	Haul out	Comments
2012	\$ 2,140,527		\$ 479,981	Y	
2013	\$ 1,913,635		\$ 706,873	N	
2014	\$ 2,943,140		\$ (322,632)	Y	
2015	\$ 3,064,661	\$ 2,515,491	\$ (444,154)	Y	
2016	\$ 2,182,633	\$ 2,526,017	\$ 437,874	N	
2017	\$ 3,224,758	\$ 2,853,798	\$ (604,250)	Y	"In 2014 and 2015 costs increased due to major mid-life maintenance work"
2018	\$ 2,208,733	\$ 2,670,196	\$ 411,775	N	"In 2014, 2015 and 2017 expenditures increased due to major mid-life maintenance"
2019	\$ 3,364,489	\$ 2,745,153	\$ (743,981)	Y	
2020	\$ 2,018,169	\$ 2,704,037	\$ 602,339	N	"In 2015, 2017 and 2019, increased expenditures were due to maintenance"
2021	\$ 3,144,332	\$ 2,683,931	\$ (523,824)	Y	
Average	\$ 2,620,508	\$ 2,671,232		6 out of 10 yrs	



**Revenues over the last ten years**

In 2010 Skagit County Commissioners determined that it was appropriate for the county to cover 35% of the operational and maintenance costs of the Guemes Island ferry service. Over the last ten years county funds actually covered 38% of the ferry operation, as seen below.

**Guemes Island Ferry**  
**Revenues and Expenses and the Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report**

Year	Revenues						Expenses		Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report		
	Ridership	Washington State		Skagit County		O&M		Fare target	Offage	Haul out	
	Fares collected	MVFT*	WSDOT**	Road Fund	Percent O&M	Total	Total				
2010	\$ 853,219	\$ 120,161	\$ 109,856	\$ 523,197	33%	\$ 1,606,433	\$ 997,158	\$ (143,939)	Y		
2011	\$ 791,897	\$ 119,969	\$ 98,490	\$ 367,876	27%	\$ 1,378,232	\$ 954,929	\$ (163,032)	N		
2012	\$ 955,670	\$ 154,610	\$ 116,337	\$ 560,133	31%	\$ 1,786,750	\$ 947,251	\$ 8,419	Y		
2013	\$ 985,791	\$ 160,843	\$ 89,216	\$ 381,762	24%	\$ 1,617,612	\$ 950,793	\$ 34,998	N		
2014	\$ 915,871	\$ 138,592	\$ 118,156	\$ 1,332,181	53%	\$ 2,504,800	\$ 899,491	\$ 16,380	Y		
2015	\$ 1,006,793	\$ 138,411	\$ 349,260	\$ 1,129,390	43%	\$ 2,623,854	\$ 996,788	\$ 10,005	Y		
2016	\$ 1,189,654	\$ 149,293	\$ 215,862	\$ 387,417	20%	\$ 1,902,906	\$ 1,095,557	\$ 94,097	N		
2017	\$ 1,160,205	\$ 168,399	\$ 159,051	\$ 1,376,251	48%	\$ 2,863,906	\$ 1,144,694	\$ 15,511	Y		
2018	\$ 1,231,829	\$ 84,683	\$ 390,074	\$ 288,074	14%	\$ 1,995,242	\$ 1,282,491	\$ (50,662)	N		
2019	\$ 1,172,643	\$ 102,636	\$ 102,603	\$ 1,725,890	56%	\$ 3,103,772	\$ 1,302,372	\$ (129,729)	Y		
2020	\$ 1,090,088	\$ 141,089	\$ 272,798	\$ 382,164	20%	\$ 1,886,139	\$ 1,386,935	\$ (296,847)	N		
2021	\$ 1,115,037	\$ 133,417	\$ 184,560	\$ 1,711,318	54%	\$ 3,144,332	\$ 1,300,624	\$ (185,587)	Y		
Total	\$ 12,468,697	\$ 1,612,103	\$ 2,206,263	\$ 10,165,653	38%	\$ 26,413,978	\$ 13,259,083	\$ (790,386)	6 out of 10 yrs		

Notes 2010 when the transition to a new model and the reporting requirements were being ironed out  
 2011 Ferry Dock Rehabilitation Project. Between March 28 and May 21, 2011 Skagit County did not collect any fare box revenue  
 2019-2021 Pandemic years  
 \* Motor vehicle fuel tax contribution  
 \*\* Washington State Department of Transportation deficit reimbursement fund for county ferry operations

This 3% disparity from 35% target spending had three main drivers: the pandemic, delay of the proposed 2019-2020 fare increase, and possible shortcomings in the 2010 fare setting methodology's consideration of the 5-year average. The outsize impact of the first two drivers can be seen in the offage from fare target in the chart above. The possible shortcomings in the fare setting methodology will be discussed further below.

## Comparing Skagit County cost recovery to similar operations in Whatcom and Pierce counties

Skagit County’s current contribution is, by percentage, already the lowest of the three most similar county-level ferry systems in the State (see Pierce County’s Fall 2022 ferry comparison study for more metrics and discussion).

### County contribution percentage

Year	Skagit/Guemes	Pierce/Anderson	Whatcom/Lummi
2017	48%	43%	47%
2018	14%	50%	47%
2019	56%	43%	47%
2020	20%	46%	40%
2021	54%	37%	
Average	39%	44%	45%

Skagit figures from FFRTTR

Whatcom and Pierce figures from Pierce County 2022 comparative analysis

## Comparison of different methodologies

### 1. Current model

The current fare setting methodology has called for additional farebox revenue for several years. Between the pandemic and the lack of a general fare increase since 2015, the farebox has underfunded the ferry operation by just under \$110,000 per year. Data for the last six years is presented below.

#### Fare box shortfall over last six years on average using current 65% - 35% methodology

Average O&M expenditure over last 6 years	\$ 2,482,716
Average county contribution actually required to cover O&M expenditures	\$ 978,519
Average target county contribution for last six years using the 35% model	\$ 868,951
Over payment by county and under payment from fare box on average over the last six years on average	\$ 109,568

### 2. Proposed cap methodology

This table shows that the proposed cap methodology would effectively reduce the County contribution by at least 15% on average, making it by far the least supportive of the three similar Washington State county ferry services. Just as important, the average additional farebox contribution this methodology suggests when using a \$750,000 cap should be \$352,877 per year. This is nearly \$400,000 less than the projected fare revenue listed on the “Proposed Fare Structure” draft.

**Current methodology outcomes over last ten years compared to KPFF "Cap Methodology" when retroactively applied  
Adjusted for inflation using 2023 dollars**

Year	Current methodology		KPFF Cap methodology		
	County expense	County % O&M	Farebox variance	County expense	County % O&M
2012	\$ 681,125	32%	-\$131,039	\$ 540,000	25%
2013	\$ 493,027	26%	\$451,624	\$ 451,624	24%
2014	\$ 1,584,559	54%	-\$1,001,313	\$ 564,000	19%
2015	\$ 1,330,813	43%	-\$749,128	\$ 570,000	19%
2016	\$ 507,197	23%	\$444,367	\$ 444,367	20%
2017	\$ 1,567,124	49%	-\$958,659	\$ 591,000	18%
2018	\$ 263,459	12%	\$318,898	\$ 318,898	14%
2019	\$ 1,730,239	51%	-\$1,249,865	\$ 621,000	18%
2020	\$ 91,289	5%	\$408,915	\$ 408,915	20%
2021	\$ 1,525,731	49%	-\$1,062,568	\$ 648,750	21%
Average	\$ 977,456	37%	-\$352,877	\$ 515,856	19.7%

**3. Modifications of the current model**

Possible shortcomings in the fare methodology adopted in 2010 (mentioned above) include lack of an adjustment for inflation when performing the 5-year look-back. Without first adjusting the past 5 years into current dollars, the methodology inadvertently discounted the fare target by the rate of inflation over those years. Also, the methodology attempted to smooth over high cost haul-out years and lower cost non haul-out years, but by using a 5 year look-back instead of an equal (or proportional, i.e. we have seen haul-outs in 6 of the last 10 years) number of years with and without haul-outs, the model produced high and low fare targets based on whether the 5-year look-back included 2 or 3 haul-out years. If these drawbacks were to be addressed, the current model would more accurately deliver the desired fare outcome. For instance, using these adjustments, target fares for 2022 would have increased by \$67,000.

**4. Model funding operations from farebox/state sources, maintenance from County sources**

An alternative fare model for the ferry service would assign operations costs to farebox and state sources and maintenance costs to County sources. Roads have initial capital costs, low level maintenance costs, and periodic higher cost repairs. Ferry services have the same cost profile, with the addition of ongoing operational costs. Only costs common to roads would thus be funded by road fund levy income. An estimate for this model would require the farebox contribution for 2023 to increase by \$544,737. Funding the difference between ferry and road funding models with fares is an additional model to consider.

In comparing these four models, including the proposed cap methodology applied to past years, the following farebox increases are suggested: approximately \$110,000 from the current model, approximately \$350,000 from the proposed cap model, approximately \$175,000 from the modified current model, and up to \$545,000 from the alternative operations/maintenance model. None of these projected farebox increases come close to the proposed \$750,000 increase.



### **Fare structure considerations**

Finally, the fare rate structure should have clear logic which establishes the relationship between different fare categories. As an example, one car and driver fare shall be equal to 4 adult passenger fares, and oversized vehicles shall pay for twice the number of vehicle spaces they take up.

In addition, frequent user categories should allow year-round users of the system to pay a consistent amount on a monthly basis. Year-round users do not create the near doubling of traffic in the peak summer months, and as such, they are not the proper group to target for peak season fare increases. Rather, a logic should be established to link additional demand to fare structure and thus to the annual revenue target. An example of this might be that the additional demand created in peak season shall contribute 40% of targeted revenue. This seasonal user segment is both least likely to change behavior due to higher fares and least impacted by fare increases.

Before fare structure changes of the proposed magnitude are implemented, community input and sustained dialogue is essential.

### **Conclusion**

Skagit County should acknowledge that the benefits generated by the Guemes Island ferry service do not accrue only to residents of Guemes Island, and therefore it is not only the tax revenues from the Island that should be considered when creating an operations and maintenance funding methodology for the ferry service operation. Considering the commitments of other Washington counties and the four models presented above to address ferry costs, a \$750,000 farebox increase is unjustified. In addition, fare structure changes should be more fully considered with all stakeholders before implementation.

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** David Prewitt (Run Studios LLC) <v-daprew@microsoft.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 31, 2023 7:54 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Rate study comments

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

### Comments 2023 Fare Rate Study

The positive economic impact of the Guemes Island ferry service across all of Skagit County far exceeds Skagit County's invested dollars. A study from the United Kingdom on the economic impact of "Lifeline" ferries (those that offer the only means of access for the community served) found that, "from a transport perspective, the economic benefits are at least ten times the costs." **Skagit County's current contribution to the annual cost of the ferry service, 35% targeted and 38% actual over the last ten years, is already the lowest of the three most similar county level ferry systems in the State**, Whatcom and Pierce Counties being the other two.

Operations and maintenance expenses when adjusted for inflation have remained more or less constant over the last ten years, averaging approximately 2.7 million dollars per year. And Skagit County's contribution has also remained more or less constant, averaging approximately one million dollars per year over the last ten years in 2021 dollars. The County's annual contribution amount has varied widely because it acts to absorb the cyclic nature of the O&M budget for the ferry service, averaging approximately \$500,000 per year in non-haul-out years and 1.5 million dollars in haul-out years. **This relatively stable expense profile does not support the need for wholesale change in the current funding methodology. It suggests that modifications to better administratively address the impact of inflation and the follow on necessity to increase fares is what is needed.**

### Suggestions

Modify current cost recovery methodology to better serve its intended purpose

1. Adjust for inflation prior to performing any look-back calculations. Without first adjusting annual figures into current dollars, the methodology appears to discount the fare target by the rate of inflation.
2. Change the calculation employed to smooth high cost haul-out years and lower cost non haul-out years to use an equal number of years with and without haul-outs.
3. Consider including the upcoming budget year as one of the years utilized in the fare recovery calculation

Fare structure considerations

1. Establish a clear mechanism for when and how much to adjust fares.

2. Consider linking the fare rate structure to clear logic which establishes the relationship between different fare categories. As an example, one car and driver fare shall be equal to 4 adult passenger fares. Oversized vehicles shall pay for twice the number of vehicle spaces they take up. Senior and youth fares shall be discounted 33% from corresponding adult rates.
3. Frequent user categories should allow year-round users of the system to face a consistent year around fare structure. Year-round users do not create the near doubling of traffic in the peak summer months, and as such, they are not the proper group to target for peak season fares. Rather, a logic should be established to proportionally link additional seasonal demand to the fare structure and thus to the annual revenue target. An example of this might be that the additional demand created in peak season shall contribute 40% of fare box revenues. This seasonal user segment is both least likely to change behavior due to higher fares and least impacted by fare pricing.
4. The fare rate structure needs to address the economic behavior of different affected parties and how they will respond to proposed changes. Cost avoidance behavior has already manifested itself over the last twenty years with the island's population doubling and ridership/use remaining flat.

**The benefits generated by the Guemes Island ferry service do not accrue only to the residents of Guemes Island, and therefore it is not only tax revenues collected from Guemes Island earmarked for the Skagit County Road Fund that should be considered when creating an operations and maintenance funding methodology for the ferry service.** Considering the commitments of other Washington counties a \$750,000 farebox increase is unjustified. Fare structure changes should be more fully considered, and include all stakeholders, prior to implementation.

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Dave Shill <shilld241@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 7:37 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners; guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry rate increase proposal

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

I am upset, even angry, about your ferry rate hike proposal, thus inspired to write a letter. I altogether reject the study suggestions and county officials' inference that Guemes Island residents do not pay their fair share. The study shows prejudice against and lack of understanding of our island population.

There are many Island residents like me who are retired and on a fixed income. Apart from shopping for groceries, we have a substantial number of medical trips to Anacortes and beyond. Your proposed 71% average rate increase poses a hardship. This is on top of increased property taxes and food prices.

Your rate study is flawed and should not be used to set rates. The COVID period's drop in fare revenues was not adequately considered.

The ferry is part of the County transportation system (like a bridge). Road funds for ferry operations should be increased, not reduced. Fare box revenues should be no more than roughly 42% of the budget.

Because the new ferry is completely funded, surcharges for it that we're collected during the current and previous rate structures should be applied to keep fares down.

The compact car rate should include cars such as the Toyota Prius, perhaps slightly more than 14'.

I also oppose charging for bicycles. They help with the parking problem and higher fares.

Do not tie future rates to the cost of living index. Our rates should be set solely by the cost of operations and the percentage ticket box revenue to cover those costs.

**Please reject the Guemes ferry rate increase proposal.**

I do support a SMALL increase. While the study has lots of information, and history, and diagrams... it fails to consider many of the tangent issues as noted above.

Sincerely,  
David B Shill  
7243 Channel View Drive  
Anacortes WA 98221

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 8:29 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Guemes Island Ferry Increase

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**From:** DAWN MERTENS <piggytruffles4cleav@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 7:01 PM  
**To:** Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Guemes Island Ferry Increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear Ron Wesen, Peter Browning and Lisa Janiki

We are writing to express our concern regarding the proposed 71% increase in fares for the Guemes Island Ferry. We have lived on the island since 2004 as full time residents. We appreciate the ferry and its crew.

The ferry is the only way to get to and from the island. The structure of the fare increase that is currently under consideration create the risk of making island residency too expensive for working families who commute and those of more limited means who can't avoid running errands on the mainline. The island community should continue to be a place where people of all income levels can make their home.

We strongly encourage the County and its Commissioners to look for other solutions. Such as:

1. Alternative fare structures that significantly reduce costs to island residents
2. Perhaps consider an electronic ticket kiosk vs a toll booth, which would facilitate walk-on self-service ticket sales vs payroll labor
3. Consider a more efficient approach to road work: utilize a crew cab vs multiple trucks while servicing island roads and boat ramp

For the conversation, consider our objection to a new ferry being proposed when the existing ferry is working, and could be useful for many years to come. If money is an issue, perhaps now is not the time for building a new ferry and it would save the tax payers of Skagit County significant amounts of money.

It's our understanding that rates have been based on a five-year historical lookback. Given the recent events surrounding Covid-19 and its fallout concerning ridership (how long did the ferry run without collection fares? Who paid for that? Feds?) How can you utilize the current methodology given that the fares were forgiven during the Covid-19 period and reduced ridership? That would need to be accounted for.

It is completely unconscionable to have an increase to this degree for anything. We have all been hit with a 20% increase to our property taxes, which includes the road tax. There needs to be a reasonable cap to any fare increase, perhaps tied to inflation as a guideline.

Respectfully,

Dawn Mertens  
Curt Omey

7753 Guemes Island Rd.  
Anacortes, WA 98221  
4252603140

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Debi Adams <bufordair@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 2:39 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Cc:** guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Regarding the ferry fare increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Email to County Commissioners and Public Works regarding the Guemes Ferry fare increase:

I find myself in quite a quandary regarding the publishing of the proposed fares for the guemes Island ferry by the KPFF company. Let me share with you:

I moved to Guemes Island in 2015, after inheriting a property from my now deceased parents. From 2015 until now, I have carefully planned and executed plans to update/upgrade my home to one that is sustainable by myself, until my death. I have invested in a new 50 year roof, replaced all of the windows, installed a mini-split system (and done away with baseboard heating which is not only very expensive, but largely ineffective for its cost). The front and back decks have been replaced, the pier-on-beam system has been engineered and updated. My outdated electrical panel has been rewired and replaced. All of these improvements have been done while I had a 40 hour per week job in Anacortes, WA and could afford to accomplish them. So, at this point, with all of these investments, my home is sustainable (for myself) until I die.

The largest problem to all of this planning is that Skagit County forgot, in all of their transparency, to send a memo regarding their lack of planning and subsequent increases in taxes, ferry fares, etc., to balance their budget. Suddenly in 2023, there is a crisis funding increase demand, followed by the statement "Guemes Island needs to pay their fair share" of these suddenly appreciated costs.

I retired in October 2022. Now on a fixed income, I will struggle with affording transportation to Anacortes 'proper' to secure groceries, services, etc. Since I am also not a 'handyperson', any services I need - like plumber, electrician, yard care, costs will reflect a hugely inflated cost of riding the ferry for purveyors of these services.

Currently I am faced with the decision of selling my home and moving because the county has proposed a mandate that will clear Guemes Island of the population of retirees, those on any sort of fixed income. I understand that it is an easy choice for those Commissioners and members of Public Works because they are not affected by these changes. Having worked in low-income housing in Anacortes for the past 13 years, I also understand the thought pattern that gives way to statements of "we don't come up with the numbers, we just have to deal with them - and you do too".

Sure wish I hadn't missed the memo that Skagit County and the Public Works dropped the ball years ago and now have to institute crisis management to make up all the differences in the next year or so.

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Dennis Clark <dennisbclark@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 3, 2023 9:56 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Support for Increasing Guemes Ferry Fares to Cover at Least 65% of Operating Costs

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

I support the Guemes Island ferry fare increases needed to meet the goal of covering 65% of the operational and maintenance costs for the ferry system.

I think that the rest of the unincorporated county should not pay any more than 35% of the operating costs for the ferry. The limited funds allocated to the Road Fund in the county budget are badly needed for road and bridge repair and maintenance elsewhere in unincorporated Skagit County. Moreover, with the exception of a small number of visitors, island residents/vacation property owners are the *exclusive* beneficiaries of the ferry. Consequently, it is unreasonable for island people to pay any less than 65% of the *operating* costs. Moreover, even with the current ferry replacement surcharge, the majority of the \$30 million *capital* costs for the new ferry will be paid for by non-island taxpayers (at least \$14 million from us Washington State taxpayers). Put another way, the total subsidy provided by the rest of us to Guemes Islanders will be much greater than 35% when we consider the sum of (annualized) capital costs combined with operating costs.

Lastly, I want to compliment the County ferry workers. They are always professional and friendly on my occasional trips on the ferry.

Dennis Clark  
3805 M Avenue  
Anacortes



## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** dee lee <dtuscs@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 7:31 PM  
**To:** Commissioners; Lisa Janicki; row@co.skagit.wa.us; Peter Browning; Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Comment submission: Guemes Island Ferry Fare hike

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Skagit County Commissioners,

I am writing to express my concern with the proposed 71% fare increase for the Guemes Island Ferry. I have been a full-time Guemes Island resident with limited income since retiring and relocating to this beautiful island in 2020. I truly appreciate the ferry and its crew.

I use the ferry at least three times a week to run errands in the mainland; while many of my neighbors are daily commuters whose jobs are in Anacortes, Mount Vernon, and surrounding areas. The significant fare increase under consideration creates financial hardship for working families and people with limited income, thus making island residency too expensive. The fare study doesn't take into account that this island community comprises of families of all income levels, not everyone lives in a mansion.

I should also note that many Guemes Island residents including myself have seen an increase of 50% on their property taxes since 2022. The property tax increase and proposed ferry fare hike will be a significant financial burden to the many residents.

I also think the fare structure should reflect a different rate (residential discount) for full-time islanders with the purchase of "punch cards" versus weekenders and/or (peak season) summer residents and visitors. As for charging walk-on passengers with bicycles, perhaps there should be an exception for "punch card" holders/full-time islanders.

Let's work together to find a solution to better serve our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Diana Tsang

Guemes Islander

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Diane P <dpkeet@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023 6:28 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Ferry increase

#####  
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#####

Thank you for requesting our input during the proposed ferry increase.

I certainly understand the need to raise the rate and also cover the 750k road budget that was used for funding in the past.

My concern is especially for my fellow island neighbors. Many of whom are retired, on fixed incomes, work jobs or have children that attend school activities in Anacortes that require frequent commutes.

Such a significant increase poses a true hardship for many living on Guemes.

I am wondering if we can further explore ways in which we could balance the budget by reducing the least used ferry runs, as often I've found some of the late runs only carrying 2-4 cars.

Any other ways of adjusting costs or increasing revenue should be examined. I think most could manage an increase of 20-30%, but I feel that 70% is just too much of a jump for many.

Thanks so much for your consideration,

Diane Pierce  
Guemes resident

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Dianne Neilson <dianne.neilson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 6, 2023 2:40 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry Fare Proposal

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

As full time senior residents who have been business owners in our pasts  
We understand the need for fare increases, however this seems an extreme rise that will have multiple implications and impacts on life here for us and so many HUNDREDS of others who have chosen to reside here on this unique island. We are concerned for many reasons and would hope you are reconsidering once you review all the input from the community.

With so many of us retired residents living on a fixed incomeS we will very likely contribute to your end goals falling short. We plan to use the ferry less often and will opt to walk on to access an additional vehicle (which will be a cheaper option for us in the long run) or walk to town or ride our bicycles.

And what's with the proposed extra charge for bicycles? They take up much less room than our wheelbarrows and carts, etc.

As a retired nurse, I am also concerned with the mental health aspect....as this astronomical increase will likely contribute to more reclusiveness with our aging population which will have a devastating effect. And it's very likely there will be fewer family & friend visitors to those aged who relish & enjoy those visits as their end of life nears. Has that been even considered?

Curious if you have seeked out/considered/had a strategic analysis done regarding this financial increase need..... reviewing the best way to accomplish your 6 yr end financial goal? There is so much more to consider....One very key piece of that is the Survival of our only store/restaurant and its community events that are so valued & important to island life here. They will very likely be tremendously impacted affecting our island community and the whole Skagit community.

It will also impact those of us who rely on our short-term rentals for income especially in these high economic times. I could find more issues

however I'm sure many others in the community are bending your ears/eyes w/thoughtful ideas and major concerns

When criticizing, we know it's best to offer suggestions, here are ours:

1. Have a **strategic** analysis done with an analyst that knows the island demographics and culture.
2. Institute a marginal increase **across the board** ....easing into future needed increases **& giving you time to evaluate or look for other avenues for revenue.**
3. Have a tiered fare...**discounted fares for** locals & homeowners
4. Charge construction and repair vehicles more as they **can** recoup the fees from their customers.
5. **Install an electronic fare collector to minimize staff needs**

We are sure many others have even more suggestions for solutions and we appreciate your reviewing and reconsidering these excessive fare increases.

Dianne & Doug Neilson  
206.940.9401  
6150 W Shore Rd

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Dianne Szerlong <d.szerlong@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 9:25 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Subject:** Ferry Rate Increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Skagit County Commissioners,

I am a full time Guemes Island resident and I am writing to voice my concerns with the proposed ferry rate increase.

We all expect a fare increase, however the KPFF proposal of a 52-92% rate increase is ridiculous and will place an undue burden on everyone who lives on Guemes.

Because there is no industry to speak of on Guemes, because there is only one restaurant selling minimal grocery items, and because there are no medical facilities on Guemes, the residents of Guemes must ride the ferry, many of us daily, to work, to feed our families and to get to any kind of medical appointments. The bulk of the fare increase should be passed along to those that do not live on Guemes.

I believe offering a significant discount to full time residents, low income families, and maybe to anyone who volunteers on the Guemes Island Fire Department are some examples of how the fare increase could be managed without undue cost for Guemes residents.

Thank you.  
Dianne Szerlong

**From:** [Dianne Szerlong](#)  
**To:** [Ferry Comments](#); [Commissioners](#)  
**Subject:** Guemes Ferry rates  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 15, 2023 12:44:54 PM

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Dear Skagit County Commissioners,

I am again writing to express my concern about the proposed ferry rate increase for Guemes Island and the severe impact it will have on my family.

We live on Guemes full time, both my husband and I must take the ferry 5 days a week for work. Our two teenagers have recently joined the workforce and must also travel off island for their minimum wage jobs. There is no alternative for Guemes residents to access essential services and the proposed fare increases are unreasonable and the fare proposal process needs to stop. The rate increases are way too high and will have unintended consequences, such as reduced ferry use and thus decreased ferry revenue.

Again, I urge you to stop the proposal process and instead engage in a meaningful dialogue with the community that relies on this essential service to develop alternatives that are fair, transparent and sustainable.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Dianne Szerlong

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Donna Davis <bamboola2is@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 31, 2023 2:51 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes ferry fares.

#####  
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#####

Dear County Commissioners,

We have lived on Guemes Island since 1999, and are now retired and living on a fixed income.

If the fare increase is as steep as proposed, it will be very difficult for us to afford trips to town. We of course need to go to town for groceries and health care appointments, so cannot simply stay home. We also own livestock, and must fetch animal feed including several truckloads of hay each year, which will be quite expensive!

If the ferry stopped running at 6:15 PM on Monday through Thursday, that would OK with us. Although an electric ferry sounds like a fine idea, it seems it is something we cannot afford at this time.

We hope you will reconsider, and try to find another source to make up some of the funds required, other than by placing this impossible burden entirely on the residents of Guemes Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Donna Davis

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 7:33 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Guemes Island Ferry Rate Increase

-----Original Message-----

From: donnarevard@icloud.com <donnarevard@icloud.com>  
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2023 2:51 PM  
To: Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
Subject: Guemes Island Ferry Rate Increase

#####

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It is with heartfelt concern that I write this email to point out the hardships that will befall residents of our island, if the commissioners follow through with the current proposed ferry rate increases. Many, particularly elders, are on fixed incomes with few options for avoiding this unreasonable fare increase, including limited mobility, access to only one vehicle, the need to regularly see doctors, etc. It is likely the increase will also decrease ridership, providing less revenue instead of more. Of course, parking is also an issue for those who would like to leave a vehicle on the Anacortes side and walk on because of congestion and vehicle safety concerns.

Please consider making the rates less detrimental to so many users or offer a significantly discounted fare for residents. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,  
Donna Revard & John Koon



## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Lisa Janicki  
**Sent:** Friday, March 3, 2023 1:18 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increase

For the record—comment sent through SW Chamber website. lj

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**From:** noreply@sedro-woolley.com <noreply@sedro-woolley.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 2:47 PM  
**To:** Lisa Janicki <ljanicki@co.skagit.wa.us>  
**Subject:** Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increase

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A user of the Sedro-Woolley Chamber of Commerce directory has requested information from you.

### Message

Dear Ms. Janiki

It is with heartfelt concern that I write this email to point out the hardships that will befall residents of our island, if the commissioners follow through with the current proposed ferry rate increases. Many, particularly elders, are on fixed incomes with few options for avoiding this unreasonable fare increase, including limited mobility, access to only one vehicle, the need to regularly see doctors, etc. It is likely the increase will also decrease ridership, providing less revenue instead of more. Of course, parking is also an issue for those who would like to leave a vehicle on the Anacortes side and walk on because of congestion and vehicle safety.

Please consider making the rates less detrimental to so many users or offer a significantly discounted fare for residents.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Donna Revard & John Koon

### Contact Information

Name: Donna Revard	Contact Pref: Email
Company: Guemes Island Citizen	Address: 6358 S. Shore Rd.
Phone: 3602988720	Anacortes, WA 98221
Email: <a href="mailto:donnarevard@yahoo.com">donnarevard@yahoo.com</a>	US

Referral generated Monday, February 27, 2023 4:46:54 PM

**Note:** Please do not respond directly to this e-mail. The originating e-mail account is not monitored.

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This email was sent on behalf of Sedro-Woolley Chamber of Commerce 810 Metcalf St Sedro Woolley, WA 98284. Report suspected email abuse by [clicking here](#). If you have questions or comments concerning this email or services in general, please contact us by email at [Monique.SWChamber@gmail.com](mailto:Monique.SWChamber@gmail.com).

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Dustin Stephens <dstephens@mo-arch.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 10:43 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** Commissioners  
**Subject:** Ferry Fare Increase Comment

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear Commissioners,

My wife, two sons and I are full time residents and property owners on Guemes Island. I attended the initial public hearing on 2/28 and took the opportunity to make a comment. During that meeting Commissioner Peter Browning stated that they have to look at running Skagit County like a business. As a business owner I know that looking at expenses is as important as looking at revenue. I find it striking what little discussion and transparency was given on the expense side of ferry operations. The consultants document reduces budget transparency down to one line, the approved 2023 budget and presumes that budget should be representative of operations moving forward. Guemes Island Ferry Committee Member Gabriel Murphy provided a handout to the Commissioners during the public hearing that summarized the annual budgets of the Guemes Island Ferry over a five-year period (2017-2021, 2022 information not currently publicly available)... a brief review of that information shows that the Guemes Ferry has historically spent \$1-1.2M less on alternating years where maintenance haul out has not occurred. 2023's budget is a haul out year and does not represent a rolling average. A rolling average based on recent years would be something like \$500-\$600K less than the 2023 budget figure and that difference would result in very different outcomes than the KPFF "study" indicates. Ferry Manager Rachel Rowe made vague statements about looking hard for cuts and expressed amounts in excess of \$200K, this would indicate that the starting budget the Ferry Manager outlines was in excess of \$700K beyond anything in recent precedent. Sandy McKean, Guemes Resident and Ferry Committee Member brought this same point up in his public comment and it was quickly dismissed by the Commissioners simply stating that the Ferry Manager stated that the budget had taken rolling average into account. Please let us all see that information to understand the nebulous expenses that are a clear point of departure from recent years and use that information to make a balanced decision. I do not have confidence that the budget framework has been established in any kind of rigorous way and has been left out of discussion or debate. Lack of transparency erodes trust and the process thus far has been opaque, mysterious, and unprecedented. Please look at and share the facts and figures that have resulted in this unprecedented proposal... as you would if you were running a business. These rate increases will have a deep and lasting affect on the Guemes Community and who can stay and who must go. We all realize there must be a fare increase, doubling the rate for resident punch cards is drastic to say the least. All the while increasing property taxes by factors of 40% for many residents this past year to go along with the substantial increases in years previous.

Thank you for considering addressing this issue with proper process.

**Dustin Stephens**  
Principal Architect

MOA /// Mobile Office Architects  
Architecture. Design. Build.  
[www.mo-arch.com](http://www.mo-arch.com)

## Jennifer Rogers

---

**From:** zellarelli@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Friday, February 24, 2023 7:49 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes ferry increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear Ferry Committee,

While I understand the need to pay our ferry workers a living wage and support the new electric ferry, it seems to me that ferry traffic has increased quite a bit since 2020. Since there have not been additional ferry runs added to the schedule, and since we've been paying a new ferry tax for several years, it would seem that the Guemes ferry should have had an increase in revenue.

Guemes has a large share of working class people, many of whom must take the ferry daily to and from work.

My two cents--if prices must increase, it seems fair that full-timers were given a discount on ferry fares, as we are the frequent flyers.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Passarelli

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Ellen Fitch <ellen.fitch@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 30, 2023 10:29 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** Commissioners; guemesferry@gmail.com  
**Subject:** RE: Fare Proposal for Guemes Island Ferry

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear Commissioners Wesen, Browning, and Janiki,

As a Guemes Island property owner and full time resident, I am writing to voice my concerns about the proposed fare increases for the Guemes Island Ferry.

Upon examining the proposed fares, one might surmise that they have been specifically designed to penalize full-time residents of the island, especially our seniors. Under the new proposal, an adult single walk on fare goes up 50% during non-peak season and 60% during peak season, but a senior and disabled single walk on fare goes up 100% for both non-peak and peak seasons. What is the justification for the larger increase for seniors? Most of the senior full-time residents of the island are on fixed incomes and can least afford such a price increase for this critical service.

The frequent-use punch cards that most residents rely on don't provide any relief from the fare increase either, in fact the price increase for them is even worse. The price of an adult walk-on punch card goes up 50% during non-peak season and 106% during peak season. And for seniors, it gets worse. Their walk-on punch card goes up 98% during non-peak season and 143% during peak season. Again, I ask what justifies penalizing Guemes Island senior residents this way?

I have been a homeowner and full time resident of the island for the past two years. In that time I have seen the assessed value of my home go up almost 50% each year, and my property taxes increase accordingly. The property taxes that I pay contribute to county services, including roads. I find the message being sent by this proposed ferry pricing - that the county doesn't believe it needs to provide the same essential services for Guemes Island residents that it does for other residents of the county - very disheartening. Guemes Island is part of the county and the ferry allows access to our part of the county, just as roads provide access to other areas of the county on the mainland. It's an essential service that everyone benefits from.

I understand that a fare increase is warranted given the increased costs associated with ferry operations, but I think it should be a more modest increase than what is being proposed and the financial burden of shouldering those costs should be distributed differently. I think island residents, including seniors and commuters who have to ride the ferry more frequently, should be given a discount as a way to keep the island affordable for those with modest incomes. That discount could be accomplished by continuing to make the punch cards available at the non-peak rate even during peak season, just as they are today and maintaining a more generous discount for senior punch cards.

Having a discount for shorter cars is sensible except why not make it for cars under 15', which is more reasonable. There are very few car models under 14', so this fare category is really quite useless. Many islanders drive small cars which fall under 15' so this would be a more reasonable cutoff for a discount fare that some people could actually benefit from.

And finally, for oversize vehicles and trailers, please don't eliminate the 5' increments in fare pricing (the proposal only has 10' increments which translates to a much larger fare being imposed when moving up to the next size category). This feels like yet another financial burden being imposed on top of the already increased fares.

Sincerely,  
Ellen Fitch

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Emma Schroder <emguemes50@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 7:19 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** I am a full time resident of Guemes . A 71 percent increase is not fair. Regular commuters on a fixed income have no choice but consider food, drugs, ferry, or property taxes. A small increase is I guess reasonable. The parking lot on the Anacortes sid...

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## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Emma Schroder <emguemes50@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 5, 2023 5:19 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** ferry ticket increase

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

I am a full time resident of Guemes Island. A 71% increase is not fair. Regular commuters that live on a fixed income will have no choice but to consider food, drugs, and property taxes.and ferry. A small increase is I guess reasonable, not 70 percent. The parking lot on the Anacortes side is not safe. It needs a camera with good resolution and better monitoring . My husband needed to go to the hospital. The E.M.T.scame to the house and they said they couldn't get the ferry crew to come for an emergency . We waited from 3:30 AM. until 6:30 for the first ferry . We have less service . Would the commissioners do that to your child or grandparents? We are people and want to be treated fairly. Emma Schroder

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Eric Veal <ejveal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 5, 2023 7:45 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Laughably bad proposal

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Hello,

Your 70% fair hike idea is absurd, out of touch and should be scrapped. Please cut costs and run a more efficient operation instead. Your proposal will seriously harm middle- and lower-income residents who rely on the ferry for life's basic necessities like food, work trips and services. You should be ashamed of yourselves for proposing such an outrageous and insulting tax caused by years of mismanagement.

Thank you,

Eric



## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Erica Halford <emhalford@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2023 6:25 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** rate increase comments

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

I have a couple comments regarding punch passes and rate increases for the Guemes Island Ferry.

Quite a few years ago, I purchased a punch pass for vehicle and driver as I visited my parents enough in the warmer months to make it cost-effective. I did not visit over the winter until the following February/March and handed the ferry worker my punch card. Without a word, they took it and wrote VOID across it in big black letters. I was horrified, it was still valid according to the date on it and only half used. They informed me rather meanly that there had been a rate increase but that they could not replace my unused portion of card with a new card or reimburse me. If I wanted to do anything I had to call someone in an office in downtown Anacortes or write a letter and so on.

Comment #1:

In the instance of a rate change, ferry workers should have the ability to compensate date-valid punch cards; this responsibility should not be unfairly forced on an uninformed customer.

OR punch cards should simply continue to be valid until their expiration date.

Comment #2:

In the event of a rate increase, I strongly advocate for directing some funding towards increasing the security of the ferry parking lot and surrounding area. e.g. better cameras with public access to feeds and history and also the means to track down and prosecute vandals and thieves. It would be great regardless of rate increase as the ability to leave my car on the Anacortes side would save unnecessary expense/ferry congestion.

I now visit Guemes on a weekly basis and very much appreciate the ferry and the employees. I pay quite a bit extra by not using a punch card, though the mean person no longer works there, and once again I was just thinking it makes sense to get one.

Thank you for taking my comments  
Erica Halford

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Erin Langley <langerin44@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 10, 2023 11:52 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Increase ferry rates support

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Hello,

As a member of the public I am in support of increasing the Guemes ferry rate. I don't think the rest of the county taxpayers should pay to subsidize those who want or need to ride the Guemes ferry.

Thank you,  
Erin Langley

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone  
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Frans Sell <franssell@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 11:12 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes Island Ferry Fare Increase Comment

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of Guemes Island and strongly protest your egregious Proposed Fare Increases. Not only do I oppose the 10 foot increments (go back to 5-foot increments) for length of vehicle which is a huge hit for residents and commercial vehicles, the fare categories need to stay as simplified as they are today. There is no reason to change the current set up. Peak and non-peak rates and all the other categories only hugely complicate things for residents who buy punch cards – we all understand these methods are meant to deceive and gouge residents.

We on the island understand that Skagit county makes the statement that ferry revenue is not supporting ferry costs, when in fact that is not true. The only reason ferry fares haven't covered ferry costs in recent years is that the county has hired very expensive consultants at hundreds of thousands of dollars without approval of the residents, and then make the claim that revenue doesn't cover ferry costs. This is a sleight of hand measure by bureaucrats at the expense of its citizens who deserve honest reporting. If the county wants to hire consultants to try to set up a narrative that the ferry is not revenue neutral or revenue positive, the cost of these high-cost consultants should be borne by the county, not the Guemes Island ferry budget. The county should cover these costs on their own and not try sneak them into our budget. Shame on you and your unscrupulous ways. There is a lot more that one could say about this egregious tax to Guemes Island residents (and it is a tax for all practical purposes) but the real situation is that the county is hiding behind a high-cost structure that you have created. Pay for your own consultants and stop your unscrupulous and Machiavellian ways. Corruption of bureaucrats never ceases to amaze us honest citizens.

All this crooked and fraudulent revenue grab comes at a time where property taxes rose 50% year over year and inflation is at a 40-year high. Stop the underhanded and deceptive methods! It is our goal to make these crooked actions transparent. The only way to look good is to be good as we are aware of the deception and will do our best to broadcast it far and wide until this dubious behavior stops. Another vote for no ferry fare increases.

Thank you,

Frans Sell  
(206) 554-1230

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Frans Sell <franssell@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 17, 2023 7:08 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** A Vote for No Fare Increase for Guemes Island Ferry

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Skagit Valley Board of Commissioners:

I am a 3-year resident of Guemes island. One of the reasons we moved here was the lower cost ferry system that could enable me and my family to live on island. I speak to residents across the island, contractors to the island (we had to have our septic system replaced this last month), workers at the Guemes Island General Store, farmers, retirees and vacationers and all are strongly opposed to the fare increase the Board of Commissioners is proposing. It is a shock and a slap in the face to those I speak with that the proposed fare increases are in many cases greater than 100%. This is crazy.

The folks I speak with are also opposed to charging different rates for peak and non-peak and creating several new categories of fares. Since inception, Guemes has had a simple fare policy that is easy for residents and contractors to the island to understand. Simple is the most fair policy and it would seem that the only reason to change the fare system would be to make things less transparent so residents have difficulty understanding exactly what they are paying. A simple fare policy is best.

The costs to bring our kids to football for the season will now cost more than \$2700 this year if you implement these crazy fare increases, vs \$1200 in 2022. \$1200 is bad enough and it makes one think twice about even letting them participate at \$2700. This will make it tough on us.

Also, the plan to immediately implement the higher fares reminds me of the federal government policy of ramming legislation through before people understand what has really happened. Let's be clear – no one is happy with the federal government and the way they have been running things lately. We moved up here to get away from bad policy but are now wondering if too many Seattleites have moved up to Skagit since the policies and methodologies seem so similar. Many many people are not happy with this way of governing.

The desire for transparency, honesty and fairness doesn't seem apparent with your committee. With this egregiously huge fare increase, most residents on Guemes have wised up to the fact that one reason that we are not meeting our ferry costs is that the county decided to use our budget to hire consultants at costs of hundreds of thousands a year just to analyze how you could soak us residents the most for more money. How incredibly ironic is that? This is terrible governance – you are here to serve with transparency and fairness. It clearly doesn't exist on this committee.

Fairness clearly wasn't the goal as otherwise these consultants would have applied a higher percentage of the ferry operating cost budget emanating from the road fund. In both Whatcom and Pierce county, those counties contribute 45% of the ferry budget from the Road fund. Here in Skagit we pay a much higher percentage of our ferry's operating costs with the Road fund only contributing 35%. Residents here know this fact too.

This fare increase is going to drive businesses from the island as lower wage earners won't be compensated enough to make it here to work, a very horrible outcome for the island economy. For those that have to travel off-island to work this will be an even harder pill to swallow. Bringing contractors to the island is going to be almost impossible without huge step-ups in cost for Guemes resident. And with a large retiree community here on island, mostly on a fixed income, this is really going to pinch. Think hard about these second order impacts.

This committee has not been transparent, is trying to ram through the fare increases immediately, dipping into our ferry budget to hire consultants to sock it to residents more with higher fares and has not even considered cost savings. Only tax increases, because let's be clear – these higher ferry fares (travel costs) are just like a tax. An egregious and high new tax.

Our real estate taxes are up 50%, inflation is the highest since I was in grade school and your committee doesn't even blink about raising fares more than 100%. For many, many on island this will be a far harder pill to swallow than even gas prices going up 100%, 200%, 300%. Do you think about these things? Do you think or care about your constituents?

Do the right thing! Stop trying to gouge residents of Guemes. You must think that island residents are rich retirees. This is so far from the truth – many families struggle today to live on the island at current fare rates. Those with families. Those on fixed incomes. And the last thing we want is for many lower-income residents to have to move off-island, so that Guemes turns into some nasty rich enclave of Seattle. Seattle is a mess.

It is the job of government to serve its constituents, to cleave to a mindset of fairness, efficiency, transparency and honesty – but your committee seems to have none of these traits. If you can't do the right thing, it will be our goal to replace you with those that will try to serve the best interest of the residents of Skagit county. Be a thoughtful and fair leader that listens to its constituents. Leave fares unchanged!

Frans Sell

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** FreaGladish <freawoof@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 7, 2023 8:04 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** Commissioners  
**Subject:** Comments on the rate study for the Guemes ferry

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

Dear Folks,

I believe that the proposed fare increase is unreasonable. It would cause financial hardship for many residents. Those of us who are able to live a modest, rural lifestyle may be forced to re-locate — but where would we go? Would we need to move into subsidized housing, increasing pressure on an already scarce resource? Managing the ferry fares in a more equitable manner would leave many families able to stay in their homes.

Do consider how much we all contribute to the ferry fund through our property tax, and other taxes and fees that we pay.

As our population ages, there is a greater need for people to help out with upkeep and healthcare. It is rare for a young family to be able to live here and help out in those ways. Raising the fare would make the situation even worse.

*I am very concerned that we may be being asked to make up a short-fall in funds that is not caused by the ferry users.* Before charging us twice as much for a trip across the channel, please, please examine how the available funds are currently being used. Every taxpayer in Skagit County made a contribution to the \$100,000 that was spent on the recent study. I can't imagine that they would all see it as money well spent!

I know that the commissioners have a lot of demands and there is only so much money to go around. This is a time to apply some creative thinking and come up with creative solutions. I heard the ferry manager say that the only two options are to raise fares, or cut service. Personally, I don't believe that is true.

Frea Gladish

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Gabriel Murphy <guemesmurphy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 13, 2023 9:40 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners  
**Subject:** 2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE

**CAUTION: This email originated from an external email address. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender, you are expecting this email and attachments, and you know the content is safe.**

*To: Skagit County Commissioners: Ron Wesen, Lisa Janicki, Peter Browning  
Public Works Director/County Engineer: Grace Kane P.E.  
Ferry Operations Division Manager: Captain Rachel Rowe  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA. 98273*

*Re: SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS FERRY DIVISION  
2023 GUEMES ISLAND FERRY FARE INCREASE*

*From: Gabriel Murphy  
5799 Edens Rd.  
Anacortes Wa. 98221  
Guemes Island resident since 1983, and tax paying property owner since 2015*

Dear Commissioners, Director, and Captain:

### **Acknowledgement of the Skagit County Commissioners:**

*Thank you for taking the time to read our statements, hold public hearings, and consider the input of your constituents. We as the Guemes Island community acknowledge that you are all very busy people, and we are a small percentage of your population, so it is not lost on us that your time is valuable and you have chosen to spend some of it considering our wellbeing. We are all very appreciative of your time! Thank you!*

### **Bottom Line Up Front:**

*Please STOP this ill conceived and untransparent process immediately! As the 2023 budget is already approved, there is NO RUSH to upend an existing process that is based on historical data and was created in collaboration with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee and the residents of Guemes Island.*

Regardless of the unforeseeable consequences of doubling the cost of an essential service for a small percentage of the population, I'd like to request that we all take a step back for a moment, pump the brakes, and look at this situation like this was a business decision. Skagit County is a business, although its customers cannot easily go somewhere else for services, and Skagit County does have the responsibility to provide these services, without discrimination, to all of its residents.

Commissioners, all three of you come from backgrounds in business, so I would like to propose that you look at the Guemes Ferry Operations as a business that you currently operate, that happens to be struggling at the moment. If this were the reality, would your initial reaction be to hire a consultant to tell you how to run your business? And if they came back and told you that if you doubled your prices, without making any other changes, that your business would begin to thrive once again? If this was your own personal livelihood at stake, I suspect you would get a second opinion. **Please stop and get a second opinion!**

### **Significant Gaps in Fare Proposal:**

- KPFF explicitly stated in their February 28th presentation that the study did NOT consider a change in ridership patterns that could result from a change in fares. This automatically delegitimizes the entire study from the get go. When prices increase even a reasonable 10-15%, consumers change their habits. When prices double, those changes are guaranteed, and hard to predict.
- The KPFF study uses a “Projected Revenue Required for Operations” of \$3,169,000. Skagit County has been requested to provide the basis for this number but has NOT made that information public. This is higher than any other single year O&M cost in history, including all haul out years, so it is a mystery where this came from. Without transparency into the calculation of this number, this fare proposal has zero credibility.
- KPFF reports a theoretical “Revenue Shortfall” of \$862,000 which is the basis for the rate increase calculations. Since the rate increases in the proposal are weighted towards multi-ride fares and oversized vehicles, this dollar value will be extracted disproportionately from full-time residents and the businesses that support those residents. With roughly 800 year round residents, you are asking for each person (on average) to contribute another \$1000 a year. This is unreasonable!
- The KPFF proposal for a “Needs Based Fare” appears to either be a miscalculation, or a complete miss. A “5-trip Convenience Vehicle Needs Based Fare” costs \$85/\$100 (non-peak/peak). A “20-trip under 22’ Multi-Ride Vehicle and Driver Fare” costs \$332/\$400 respectively. It appears that the cost per trip during peak season is the same, and it appears that in non-peak, the “Needs Based” fare is more expensive. Is this a mistake?

**Here is the reality of the situation:** The cost of operating the Guemes Island Ferry is increasing due to a number of factors including: inflation, increased cost of labor, increased cost of fuel, increased cost of routine maintenance due to deferred maintenance of a 44 year old vessel. Dropping the full force of these cost increases onto a small community all at once will be catastrophic. Skagit County has the responsibility to provide a fair and equitable fare structure to the residents of Guemes Island who DO pay their “fair share” in Road Fund taxes and General Fund taxes, as well as contribute to the overall economy of Skagit County.

**Please do the right thing! Stop this process immediately! Engage with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee and the residents of Guemes Island to come up with a plan that both satisfies the financial needs of Skagit County as well as considers the financial and economic wellbeing of the Guemes Island community.**

Respectfully,  
Gabriel Murphy



## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Gabriel Murphy <guemesmurphy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 15, 2023 3:53 PM  
**To:** Commissioners; Grace Kane; Rachel Rowe  
**Cc:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Rate Study Counterproposal  
**Attachments:** Guemes Island Ferry System 2023 Proposal.pdf

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Hello Commissioners and Public Works leadership,

Rather than submitting a statement of any sort, I thought it would be more prudent to submit a counter proposal to the KPFF proposal which stands to cause irreversible and undesirable changes to the Guemes Island community over the next decade.

I understand that the roads in Skagit County need work and that the Guemes Ferry operation can sometimes be a burden to the Road Fund when fares are not increased incrementally over time.

That said, I believe that there are many opportunities for improvement in both the way the system is operated as well as the way that the Guemes Island public interacts with the Skagit County leadership team.

I am committed to working with you all in the future and I am looking forward to helping improve the way the Guemes Ferry system operates.

Please consider the attached proposal and please reach out to me directly with any questions. I will be following up with you shortly as well.

As always, thank you for your time and consideration!

Gabe Murphy



*Photo Credit to Chris LeBoutillier, guemesislandferry.com*

**Guemes Island Ferry System Fare Rate Proposal  
June 15, 2023**

**Prepared for:**  
The Skagit County Board of County Commissioners

**Prepared by:**  
A Consortium of Guemes Island Residents

## **Executive Summary**

This proposal intends to provide a fact based approach to setting fares for the Guemes Island Ferry System that supports the financial goals of Skagit County Public Works and the Board of County Commissioners, while considering the long term needs of the community and stakeholders of Guemes Island. The recommendations within this proposal are based on data collected by Skagit County that represent actual Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs of running the ferry system. It recognizes the variability of state funding sources as well as the cyclical cost of biennial haul outs that are hard to predict on a yearly basis. This approach will serve the current ferry system operating the M/V Guemes until its retirement in a few years and will scale well during the transition to the new all-electric M/V Guemes II.

### **Overall strategies and tactics of the proposal:**

**Implement fare increases in a manner that minimizes the risks from fare elasticity, thereby making revenue predictions more accurate on a year to year basis.**

- Implement a fare increase of approximately 15% in the summer of 2023, to be effective through the end of 2024.
- Reassess farebox revenue and overall O&M costs through the end of 2024 and adjust fares again based on real data.
- Adjust fares on an annual basis as needed to keep the ferry system operating within range of the 65% farebox recovery mandated by the Board of County Commissioners.

**Community engagement upholding the key tenets of the 2022-2032 Skagit County Strategic Plan for transparent and collaborative communication with the stakeholders of the Guemes Ferry System**

- Public Works will engage with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee and any other community members interested in the process, to work to adjust fares on a yearly basis to meet the financial needs of Skagit County.
- The Guemes Island Ferry Committee will work with the Guemes Island community at large to gather feedback and communicate that to Public Works and the BoCC.
- Uphold Skagit County's Strategic Plan values of Collaboration, Communication, Customer Service, and Financial Sustainability.
- Follow the process outlined in Resolution # R20100050 / R20110382, Appendix A, or a process with a similar level of engagement.

**Continuation of the functioning existing processes, introduction of new processes and process improvements that increase efficiencies and external funding sources.**

- Continue the yearly submittal of the *County Ferry Systems Operations Report* which results in an average state contribution to the ferry system of \$332,000 from the combination of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) contribution and the WSDOT Deficit Reimbursement contribution.
- Continue the Public Forum to keep the community engaged in the process of adjusting fares.
- Look for new federal and state funding sources to supplement the cost of O&M, with the help of the Guemes Island Ferry Committee.
- Look for cost savings, operational efficiencies and system improvements.

## **Introduction**

This proposal uses an incremental annual approach to adjust fares based on the existing methodology, combined with a robust community engagement plan that helps advise future increases and build community support for the financial stability of the ferry system.

Since ridership has been roughly flat since the year 2000 and the fares have not been increased since October 1, 2015 due to a number of factors, fare recovery has remained relatively consistent creating the illusion that the methodology doesn't work. In reality, when fares are consistently and incrementally increased on a yearly basis to cover actual O&M costs, the system works as designed.

## **Objectives**

- Increase ferry revenue generation using a transparent, responsible, community-centric approach to create a sustainable ferry system which lessens the burden on the county Road Fund.
- Maintain predictable ridership patterns through thoughtful rate increases that minimize acute financial impact on island residents, therefore reducing the likelihood of behavioral changes.
- Promote and maintain open and direct communication between Skagit County Public Works and the Board of County Commissioners, Guemes Island residents, and the Guemes Island Ferry Committee.

## **Approach**

**Step 1:** Use ridership data collected since 1980 to understand the historical trends and the demographic and physical limitations that cap the system's revenue generation capabilities.

**Step 2:** Review and analyze the Guemes Island Ferry Revenue and Expenses data, beginning in 2010 when resolutions R20100050 / R20110382 were passed.

**Step 3:** Use the current "5-year average" methodology, calculate the difference between the "Ferry Fare Target" and the "Farebox Revenue" plus the Washington State funding sources. This will give you the amount you would like to account for in the next annual fare increase.

**Step 4:** Adjust fares based on the above projection. While continuing to collect data to help advise the future fare adjustments.

## **Summary of proposed fare changes:**

- Raise adult fares, vehicle and rider, punch cards, and oversize vehicle fares as listed below
- Retain youth, senior and disabled rates at current fare
- Discontinue motorcycle + senior/disabled driver fare class
- Discontinue oversize class for 60 - 65 ft. and Stacked logging truck categories
- Retain existing oversize vehicle classifications by 5 foot increments

**Recommended Fare Schedule for Implementation in 2023**

<b>FARE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Current Non-Peak</b>	<b>New Non-Peak</b>	<b>Current Peak</b>	<b>New Peak</b>
<b>PASSENGER</b>				
Adult	\$4.00	\$4.50	\$5.00	\$5.50
Senior (65+)/disabled/youth (6-17)	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$3.00	\$3.00
Children 5 or younger	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>PASSENGER PUNCH CARD (valid 90 days from purchase date)</b>				
25-trip adult	\$77.00	\$84.50	\$77.00	\$84.50
25-trip senior (65+)/disabled/youth (6-17)	\$46.00	\$53.75	\$46.00	\$53.75
<b>VEHICLE (20 ft. or less, including overhang)</b>				
Motorcycle & rider	\$7.00	\$7.75	\$10.00	\$11.25
Motorcycle & senior/disabled rider	\$6.00	Discontinue	\$9.00	Discontinue
Vehicle & driver	\$12.00	\$13.50	\$15.00	\$16.75
Vehicle & senior/disabled driver	\$10.00	\$11.25	\$12.00	\$13.50
<b>VEHICLE PUNCH CARD (20 ft. or less; valid 90 days from purchase date)</b>				
20-trip vehicle & driver	\$196.00	\$221.50	\$196.00	\$221.50
20-trip vehicle & senior/disabled driver	\$156.00	\$177.25	\$156.00	\$177.25
20-trip motorcycle & rider	\$117.00	\$129.75	\$117.00	\$129.75
20-trip motorcycle & senior/disabled rider	\$98.00	Discontinue	\$98.00	Discontinue
<b>OVERSIZE VEHICLES &amp; VEHICLES W/ TRAILERS (including driver)</b>				
Vehicle longer than 20 ft. to less than 25 ft.	\$17.00	\$19.50	\$21.00	\$24.00
Vehicle 25 ft. to less than 30 ft.	\$25.00	\$28.75	\$30.00	\$34.50
Vehicle 30 ft. to less than 35 ft.	\$33.00	\$38.00	\$39.00	\$45.00
Vehicle 35 ft. to less than 40 ft.	\$42.00	\$48.00	\$51.00	\$58.75
Vehicle 40 ft. to less than 45 ft.	\$52.00	\$60.00	\$64.00	\$73.50
Vehicle 45 ft. to less than 50 ft.	\$64.00	\$73.50	\$78.00	\$89.75
Vehicle 50 ft. to less than 55 ft.	\$77.00	\$88.50	\$94.00	\$108.00
Vehicle 55 ft. to less than 60 ft.	\$90.00	\$103.50	\$109.00	\$125.25
Vehicle 60 ft. to less than 65 ft.	\$105.00	Discontinue	\$129.00	Discontinue
Each 5 ft. increment longer than 65 ft., add	\$8.00	\$9.25	\$8.00	\$9.25
Vehicle wider than 8 ft., 6 in	2x length charge	2x length charge	2x length charge	2x length charge
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>				
Stacked logging truck	\$124.00	Discontinue	\$124.00	Discontinue
Extended Run (1 run at end of day) + fare	\$120.00	\$140.00	\$120.00	\$140.00
Guemes Special (crew call-out) + fare	\$500.00	\$575.00	\$500.00	\$575.00
Charter Rate (3 hr. min.) + fare	\$1,200.00	\$1,400.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,400.00
Add'l cost per hour, each add'l hour	\$400.00	\$460.00	\$400.00	\$460.00

## Step 1: Review of Ridership Trend

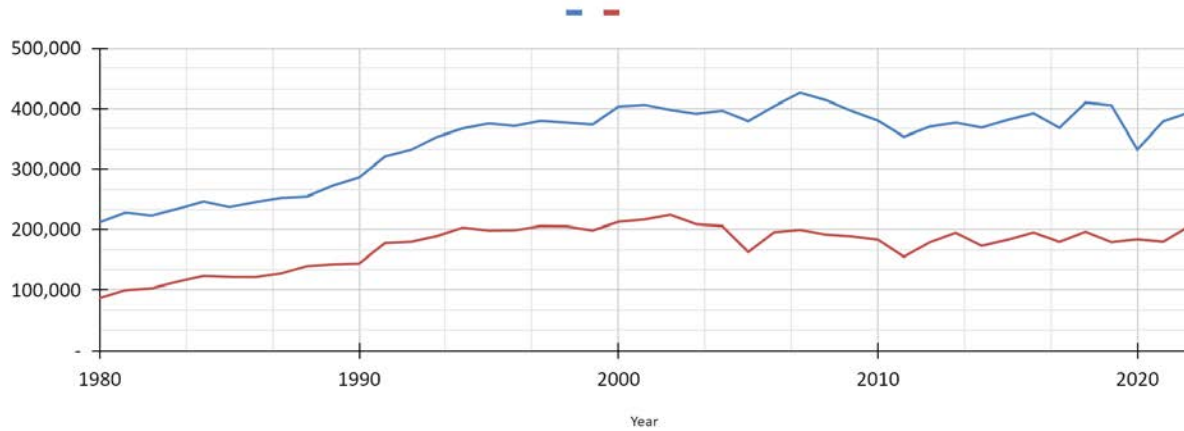
Use ridership data collected since 1980 to understand the historical trends and the demographic and physical limitations that cap the system's revenue generation capabilities.

- Ridership gradually increased from 1980 until about the year 2000, in theory increasing the revenue generation capacity of the system.
- From the year 2000 up until the most recent available dataset in 2022, the ridership has fluctuated some year to year, but has trended flat.
- Considering this flat ridership trend, this puts a limit on the system's ability to increase revenue by collecting more fares.
- Increasing fares incrementally on an annual or biennial basis is the only feasible way to generate more revenue.

### Guemes Island Ferry Ridership Trends:

■ = Passengers ■ = Vehicles

Passenger and Vehicle Ridership 1980 - 2022



## **Step 2: Review of Revenue and Expenses Data**

Review and analyze the Guemes Island Ferry Revenue and Expenses data, beginning in 2010 when R20100050 was passed and amended by R20110382.

- The Differential for each year is the amount of revenue (or loss) between the Fare Revenue Target and the actual Fare Box Revenue collected.
- In 2010 and 2011, the system was recovering less than the Fare Revenue Target, even though the percent contribution from the Road Fund was less than the desired 35%.
- Also in 2011, a fare increase was recommended and passed by the board, and in the next several years, the Differential became positive.
- The Differential then peaked in 2013 and decreased in 2014 and 2015, while the Road Fund Contribution increased beyond the desired 35% triggering another rate increase in 2015.
- Following the rate increase in 2015, the Differential remained in the positive until 2017 when the cost of biennial maintenance haul outs began to increase significantly, starting to put more stress on the Road Fund.
- In 2018, rather than increasing the fares to correct the Differential trend as had been done in the past, Public Works and the BoCC added a Capital Surcharge to the ferry fare, in essence increasing the rates that the ferry users pay, while not correcting the Differential trend.
- Adding the Capital Surcharge and increasing the rates at the same time would have been problematic for the ridership.
- If the fares had been increased in 2018 as the existing methodology had shown necessary, the Differential would have been corrected and the Road Fund burden would have been alleviated.

**Guemes Island Ferry System  
Revenue and Expenses  
2010-2022:**

			Revenues				Expenses			
			Ridership	Washington State		Skagit County	O&M	Road Fund Contribution		
Year	Differential	Fare Revenue Target	Farebox Revenue	MVFT*	WSDOT**	Road Fund	Total	Percentage of Total O&M	Event	
2010	\$ (143,939)	\$ 997,158	\$ 853,219	\$ 120,161	\$ 109,856	\$ 523,197	\$ 1,606,433	32.57%	Haul out	
2011	\$ (163,032)	\$ 954,929	\$ 791,897	\$ 119,969	\$ 98,490	\$ 367,876	\$ 1,378,232	26.69%	Rate Increase	
2012	\$ 8,419	\$ 947,251	\$ 955,670	\$ 154,610	\$ 116,337	\$ 560,133	\$ 1,786,750	31.35%	Haul out	
2013	\$ 34,998	\$ 950,793	\$ 985,791	\$ 160,843	\$ 89,216	\$ 381,762	\$ 1,617,612	23.60%		
2014	\$ 16,380	\$ 899,491	\$ 915,871	\$ 138,592	\$ 118,156	\$ 1,332,181	\$ 2,504,800	53.19%	Haul out	
2015	\$ 10,005	\$ 996,788	\$ 1,006,793	\$ 138,411	\$ 349,260	\$ 1,129,390	\$ 2,623,854	43.04%	Haulout/Rate Increase	
2016	\$ 94,097	\$ 1,095,557	\$ 1,189,654	\$ 149,293	\$ 215,862	\$ 387,417	\$ 1,902,906	20.36%		
2017	\$ 15,511	\$ 1,144,694	\$ 1,160,205	\$ 168,399	\$ 159,051	\$ 1,376,251	\$ 2,863,906	48.06%	Haulout	
2018	\$ (50,080)	\$ 1,282,491	\$ 1,232,411	\$ 84,683	\$ 390,074	\$ 288,074	\$ 1,995,242	14.44%	Surcharge Addition	
2019	\$ (129,729)	\$ 1,302,372	\$ 1,172,643	\$ 102,636	\$ 102,603	\$ 1,725,890	\$ 3,103,772	55.61%	Haulout	
2020	\$ (296,847)	\$ 1,386,935	\$ 1,090,088	\$ 141,089	\$ 272,798	\$ 382,164	\$ 1,886,139	20.26%		
2021	\$ (185,587)	\$ 1,300,624	\$ 1,115,037	\$ 133,417	\$ 184,560	\$ 1,711,318	\$ 3,144,332	54.43%	Haulout	
2022	\$ (261,312)	\$ 1,463,031	\$ 1,201,719	\$ 132,992	\$ 451,672	\$ 1,118,211	\$ 2,904,594	38.50%		

<b>13 Year Average Yearly Contribution</b>	<b>\$ 867,990</b>
<b>13 Year Average Percent Contribution</b>	<b>35.54%</b>



### **Step 3: Use the Fare Revenue Target Methodology to calculate the necessary fare increase**

Use the current “5-year average” methodology, calculate the difference between the “Ferry Fare Revenue Target” and the “Farebox Revenue” plus the Washington State funding sources. This will give you the amount you would like to account for in the next annual fare increase discussion.

- Calculate the Fare Revenue Target for 2023 as 65% of the adjusted O&M: \$1,434,882
- Subtract from this the 5-year average farebox revenue of: \$1,162,380
- The target revenue increase required would need to be: \$272,500
- Based on a 15% fare increase, the potential additional revenue would be approximately: \$175,000.

### **Step 4: Adjust fares based on the above projection while considering cost savings measures and continuing to collect data to help advise the future fare adjustments.**

- Given that a 15% increase in fares is likely the most fares could be increased without risking substantial ridership change in behavior, it is recommended to stay at this amount, even though it may not achieve full recovery.
- With the approximate addition of \$175,000 in revenue, there remains the need to generate an additional \$97,500, or implement cost cutting measures.
- Alternately, taking this same approach in the following year or two should bring the system revenue to where it needs to be.
- Additional cost savings measures include:
  - Shopping around for less expensive insurance coverage
  - Saving fuel by crossing the Guemes Channel directly instead of taking wide arcs across the channel.
  - Shopping around for less expensive payment processing services. (Several of these exist)
  - Looking for additional state and federal grant funding options.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

We recommend using the existing process for calculating the ticket fare revenue target outlined in Appendix B of Resolution # R20110382, with the following considerations:

- Develop an annual process to look for cost savings in operations and maintenance spending, including:
  - Review of past year expenses
  - Identifying opportunities for cost savings (e.g. allocation of insurance coverage)
  - Look for alternative funding sources (e.g. qualification for Youth Ride Free funding from WA state)

### **Public Input Recommendations:**

We recommend following the process outlined in Appendix A of Resolution # R20110382, with the following considerations:

- Determine an alternative location for the public forum(s), that is mutually accessible to Public Works, the Board of Commissioners, and Guemes Ferry stakeholders
- Establish a location for public access for documents such as, the annual Work Plan, Public Forum information, and archive public comments.
- Formalize the engagement calendar dates for stakeholder input and collaboration.

### **Conclusion**

This proposal is presented in a good faith effort to work with the Board of Commissioners and Public Works to create a sustainable and collaborative fare calculation process for the remainder of the M/V Guemes' time in service. The process outlined, when put into practice can establish adequate fare revenue for sustainable ferry operation.

As we look to the future, this proposal provides a methodology for transparent, resilient fare development, collaborative stakeholder engagement, and a responsible sustainable process that will serve us well as a County, a community, and as a shining example of how to run an efficient sustainable ferry system for WA state.

## ATTACHMENT "A"

### GUEMES ISLAND FERRY OPERATIONS PUBLIC FORUM

#### Purpose:

The Public Forum process is intended to:

1. Provide opportunities for collaborative discussion between the County and the public on issues related to the Guemes Island ferry operations; and
2. Provide the County, the Guemes Island Ferry Committee, other organizations, and citizens at-large with a venue to provide public advisory input on issues concerning Guemes Island ferry operations.

Public Works will consider and evaluate information and advisory input gathered through the Public Forum process when making decisions on the various aspects of the Guemes Island ferry operations and in development of recommendations made to the Board.

#### Administration:

Public Works is expected to:

- Hold a Public Forum meeting two times a year or as otherwise deemed necessary or desirable to address operational needs and other issues of concern relative to the Guemes Island ferry operations.
- Prepare and distribute to the public a Guemes Island Ferry Operations Work Plan (Work Plan) at the beginning of each calendar year which should include topics on which Public Works intends to gather public advisory input during the ensuing calendar year together with information as to how the public may provide advisory input on the topics included in the Work Plan to Public Works throughout the year.
- Provide the public with information which encourages effective and collaborative discussion on issues and topics contained within the Work Plan and brought forward in the Public Forum meetings.
- Develop Public Forum meeting agendas, times, and locations and provide notification of such information at least two (2) weeks prior to each scheduled Public Forum meeting, by posting such information at the Guemes Island Ferry terminal(s) and by placing such information on Skagit County's website.
- Gather advisory input from the Guemes Island Ferry Committee, other interested organizations, and citizens at-large through the Public Forum process.

- Post Public Forum meeting summaries at the Guemes Island Ferry terminal(s) and place such information on Skagit County's website.
- Meet with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee, other interested organizations and citizens at-large as is deemed necessary. These sessions are for the purpose of facilitating detailed and collaborative dialogue between such interested parties and Public Works and are intended to develop recommendations as to operational practices relative to the Guemes Island Ferry operation. Such on-going meetings will be used to discuss and work toward resolving issues identified in the Work Plan. Inclusive of these meetings is the development of progress reports, updated annual Work Plans, and recommendations to the Board. It is further expected that the Public Works Director and senior management of the department will actively participate in such on-going meetings.

Report annually to the Board during the month of April regarding the Guemes Island Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report and include fare recommendations. Report annually to the Board during the month of November regarding the Guemes Island Ferry Operations Status Report. Included in this report shall be a financial evaluation, results of the past year's Work Plan activity, and the proposed Work Plan for the coming year.

**Meetings:**

The public is invited to attend, observe, and participate in an orderly fashion at any Public Forum meeting.

**Calendar of Events:**

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (January through March) – Public Works staff distributes to the Public the Work Plan reviewed by the Board during the previous year end. The Work Plan will include topics on which the county intends to gather public advisory input during the ensuing Work Plan year, and information as to how the public can provide advisory input in the topics included on the Work Plan to the County throughout the year. Public Works staff prepares a Draft Annual Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report which shall include a recommended rate schedule. Public Works staff conducts the Annual Public Forum meeting for the purpose of discussing issues and efforts included on the Work Plan and to solicit advisory input on the Draft Annual Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report.

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (April through June) – Public Works staff presents to the Board the Annual Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report which shall include a recommended rate schedule.

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (July through September) – Board may conduct a public meeting at a location deemed appropriate by the Board for the purposes of hearing advisory input as to any and all community concerns relative to the Guemes Island community. Public Works staff prepares a draft Ferry Operations Status Report regarding Guemes Island Ferry operations annual accomplishments, including progress achieved on the current Work Plan; and prepares a draft Work Plan for the upcoming year. Public Works staff conducts the second Annual Public

Forum meeting for the purpose of discussing issues and efforts included on the to solicit advisory input on the Draft Operations Status Report.

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (October through December) – Public Works staff presents to the Board the Ferry Operations Status Report and the coming year's Draft Work Plan. Public Works staff works with the Board in the final adoption of the Ferry Division's portion of the Public Works budget for the upcoming year, and finalizes the coming year's Work Plan.

**Written Communication:**

Written comments or questions relative to the Guemes Island ferry operations may be submitted to:

Skagit County Director of Public Works  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-5625

## ATTACHMENT "B"

### GUEMES ISLAND FERRY TICKET FARE METHODOLOGY

#### **Purpose:**

It is the desire of the Board that the County's ferry fare revenue target be calculated as a percentage of the overall system operating and maintenance costs as computed in the annual Deficit Reimbursement Report provided to the State less revenues from the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax and State Ferry Deficit Reimbursement. In order to balance and mitigate potential large variations in year-to-year maintenance costs and revenues from the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax and State Ferry Deficit Reimbursement, these costs and revenues will be averaged over the previous five (5) County calendar fiscal year periods.

#### **Ferry Fare Revenue Target:**

The ferry fare revenue target shall be calculated as follows:

- The ferry fare revenue target, using data from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year, is equal to:
- The five (5) calendar year average of ferry operating and maintenance costs as computed in the prior annual deficit reimbursement reports submitted to the State. For purposes of this resolution, capital expenditures are not included in the ferry operating and maintenance costs and shall be defined as all capital expenditures defined in WAC 136-400-030 and other capital costs including financing and depreciation expenses applied to the replacement, expansion, or creation of ferry system physical elements, less
- the five (5) year average of the State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax received by the County for operation and maintenance of the ferry system, less
- the five (5) year average of the State Ferry Deficit Reimbursement received by the County,
- the total of the above multiplied by 65%

#### **Reporting Requirements:**

Prior to April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, Public Works shall prepare and submit a report to the Board that calculates the County's ferry fare revenue target pursuant to the above formula, and shall recommend a ferry rate schedule for the upcoming calendar year with an estimate of fare revenues based on these rates. The Draft Annual Ferry Fare Revenue Target Report shall be subject to advisory input through the Public Forum process prior to submittal to the Board. The Board shall review the report and by resolution set fare rates for the following year.

March 8, 2023

Skagit County Board of Commissioners  
1800 Continental Pl.  
Mt. Vernon WA, 98273

RE: Guemes Ferry Fare Proposal

Dear Commissioners,

I am sending this letter to you directly because of the potential unintended consequences which I believe will result if this fare proposal is implemented. I believe that your leadership and oversight is needed to avoid any more angst than the proposal has already generated here on Guemes Island.

I served for 32 years on the Guemes Island Ferry Committee from 1981 until 2013. In fact, I was the person that Commissioner Jerry Mansfield called to help form an Island based ferry committee that would be independent of any organization and represent all of Guemes Island. One of the first items we considered were fares and the methodology by which fares would be determined because there was no formula being used at that time. This was the beginning of the "Bridge Analogy" which was developed in concert with Commissioners Jerry Mansfield, Howard Miller and Bud Norris. The Bridge Analogy basically said that the ferry was our "bridge" to the mainland. The BOCC and the Ferry Committee agreed that since Skagit County had over 100 bridges with no fares, the fares for the ferry would reflect those expenses which were unique to the ferry operation, i.e. wages, fuel and insurance. We also adopted the principal that any fare increases would be based on actual operational expenses from year end reports not guesswork or speculation. The bridge analogy has been accepted by subsequent County Commissioners through the years.

At this time in 2023, it appears that we have come "full circle" when I look at the fares proposed. The present proposal is not based in accordance with the current Resolution R20110382 which specifically details the procedure for setting fares. Rather than adhering to Resolution R20110382, it has been replaced by unknown methodology which appears to be nothing more than guesswork. The result is a proposal which nearly doubles the fares. As a lifelong resident of Guemes Island, I can unequivocally say that I have never seen any fare proposal that has generated so much angst among Guemes Island ferry users.

I believe that before proceeding any further with this current proposal, we should return to Resolution No. 20110382 to find out what the result would be if it was followed. If the BOCC was to request Public Works to follow the resolution currently in place, it would receive the support of Guemes Island ferry users rather than the turmoil this proposal has generated.

Finally, if this proposal was to be accepted and the fares implemented, I believe it will not result in increased revenue but rather a decrease since more islanders will keep a car in town and become foot passengers. With every fare increase through the years, this has been the result.

Sincerely,

Glen Veal

March 9,2023

To Whom It May Concern,

On May 8, 2023, I sent a letter to the BOCC outlining my reasons why the BOCC should use the current Resolution R20110382 for establishing fares for the Guemes ferry. In short, it only makes sense to stay with the time tested resolution in place rather than attempt methodology which is yet defined. We should, at least, use the current resolution to calculate what the result would be before replacing it with guesswork. Using established numbers rather than speculation and projections is at the core of Resolution R20110382.

Today, I would like to point out how the proposed fares could affect the future of agricultural land on Guemes Island. As a longstanding farmer, with my brother, on Guemes since 1971, I have taken satisfaction in helping maintain the rural character of Guemes Island. Until last year, I put up hay for our cattle on approximately 80 acres of hayfields. Some of the hay was on our property and some of it was on various neighbor's property. Most all of these hayfields are classified in agricultural open space which requires showing income on the acreage. This will be the last year my brother and I will have any cattle but I am planning on continuing baling hay on many of these hayfields in order to maintain our, and others, agricultural tax classification. Instead of selling beef, I am planning on selling hay.

The proposed fares could ruin my plans because it will nearly double the cost of the truck rates for the Guemes ferry. Already, it will be hard to compete in the hay bale market because of the current truck fares. The new fares could make it nearly impossible. Maintaining the rural character of Guemes Island has been a commonly held community value through the years. I am sure many people will be disappointed if any of it is gone and replaced with subdivision. However, that is more than likely the result if I am unable to keep on farming as result of onerous ferry fares.

Finally, we all know that the fares proposed do not matter to the summer vacationers and visitors because the ferry fare cost is just part of their vacation plan. However, if you live on Guemes Island year round it is another story. Particularly for those who must go to town daily to get to their job and those with children in school and the disabled, While having another car in town has been the outcome of past fare increases, this fare increase could result in more cars in town than can be accommodated in the current parking lot resulting in parking problems similar to the ferry haul-outs.

I believe there should not be a rush to implement any fare increase before May 1 without a thorough review of the unintended consequences of the fare increase proposed. This is no time to venture into "uncharted waters".

Sincerely,

Glen Veal  
4453 Edens Rd.



March 13, 2023

Skagit County Commissioners  
1800 Continental Place  
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

RE: Alternatives to the 2023 Fare Proposal

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing you today to outline alternatives to the extreme fares proposed for Guemes Island ferry users. I am convinced that it is not necessary for such a “quantum leap” in fares if the Board would provide leadership and oversight to the process. Below are my suggestions and I hope you will find them worthy of consideration.

- 1) Please use the current resolution R201110382 as a starting point to calculate what the outcome would be if it was to be used. This Resolution is the result of 30 years of work between County Commissioners, Public Works and the Guemes Island Ferry Committee. Although it may not be perfect, it establishes a process that has met the test of time. The current Resolution could be amended to reflect the financial needs of the ferry operation without replacing it with a new resolution or methodology that is unproven. This process could be a collaborative effort between Public Works and the Ferry Committee in order to find an acceptable solution to all parties in accordance with the current Resolution.
- 2) Give credit to Guemes Island for the taxes collected for the Road Fund. Guemes Island has one of the fastest growing real estate valuations in Skagit County according to the County Assessor’s office. Their records show an evaluation in 2020 of \$375,039,163 increase to \$574,518,492 in 2022. The taxes collected for the Road Fund in 2022 were approximately \$746,874. This amount of money is never credited toward the ferry operation but maybe it is time to give credit for some, or all, of it in ferry revenue fare calculations.
- 3) Give Guemes Island credit for the Real Estate Excise Tax collected. Although I have only data for the last two years of real estate sales on Guemes, the amount in 2021 was \$20,611,000. In 2022, real estate sales were \$23,956,750. Although it is difficult to determine the exact amount of excise tax collected from Guemes Island, it could easily be calculated by the proper agency. I did find out from Public Works that in 2014, the BOCC allocated \$500,000 of the excise tax to the Road Fund. In 2022, \$13,366 was allocated to Young Park on Guemes. Apparently, these allocations were made by the BOCC during the budget process. Why not allocate some of the excise tax to the Guemes Ferry operation, or the Road Fund, on an annual basis?

Although there may be other sources of funding for the Road Fund that I am not aware of, I believe it is time to stop painting the Guemes Ferry, as a financial burden to Skagit County but rather the asset that it truly is.

Sincerely,

Glen Veal



**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Commissioners  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 6, 2023 4:31 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** FW: New fare proposal

-----Original Message-----

From: Glen Veal <glenaveal@gmail.com>  
Sent: Thursday, July 6, 2023 4:15 PM  
To: Commissioners <commissioners@co.skagit.wa.us>  
Subject: New fare proposal

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Dear Commissioners,

First, I want to thank you for the Public Hearing you held on June 8, 2023. Although I have written several letters regarding the proposed fares and spoken twice in front of you, I want to ask you to postpone the total implementation of the fares as proposed on June 10, 2023. While I am not against the 14% overall increase, I believe that there needs to be more public discussion about some of the other parts of the proposal before it is accepted.

1) Do not rescind the existing Resolution No. 20110382 which specifically details the procedure for setting fares. This Resolution requires more public input and a collaborative process with Public Works and Guemes Islanders. This process was ignored in the new proposal and replaced by an expensive consultant and an autocratic approach by Public Works which demonstrates a complete disregard for a process that has worked well for over 40 years and has had the support of all previous Commissioners and Public Works Directors. There is nothing wrong with the existing Resolution which relies on facts not guesswork. The new fare proposal outlined by the ferry manager on June 8, the words “best guess” were used numerous times when describing how it would work. This is the very thing that we had eliminated in all the years that I served on the Ferry Committee from 1981 through 2013.

2) Please acknowledge the property taxes collected from Guemes Island. In 2023 the road fund taxes collected from Guemes Island will be \$787,523. If that amount was credited to the ferry operation, there would no need to double our fares over the next five years. Skagit County certainly doesn’t spend that much on the roads of Guemes annually.

3) Please recognize that the real estate sales on Guemes are a large contributor of money to Skagit County coffers. Without the ferry, it is hard to imagine just where real estate prices would be. In 2021, real estate sales were \$20,611,000. In 2022, real estate sales were \$23,956,750. Although it is difficult to determine the exact amount of real estate excise tax collected from Guemes Island sales, it could be easily calculate if some effort was given to the task. I did find out from Public Works that in 2014, the BOCC allocated \$500,000 of the real estate excise tax to the Road Fund and in 2022, \$13,366 was allocated to Young Park on Guemes. Why not allocate some of the real estate excise tax to the Guemes Ferry operation on an annual basis?

I hope you will consider my points and postpone the entire adoption ( except for the 14%) of the new fare proposal until more public input has been received through public meetings and with the Guemes Island Ferry Committee as outlined

in Resolution No. 20110382. There is no need to venture off into "unchartered waters" when a methodology exists that has withstood the test of time for over 40 years.

Sincerely,

Glen Veal  
4453 Edens Rd.  
Guemes Island

**Jennifer Rogers**

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**From:** Grant Brockmeyer <ghbroc@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 1, 2023 10:53 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Fare increase

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To whom it may concern,

I cannot believe after such a large increase in my property tax, which I thought was part of the road fund, you want to raise ferry fares an outrageous amount and continue raising them yearly. Wow. Go back to having the last run at 6:00pm. Charge tourists and off islanders more. Why no reasonably priced discount card for residents? Do bikes take up more room than wheel barrows and carts, why penalize bike riders with higher cost? I see no proposal for the many low income people on the island.

So if the road fund has more money will the ditches on Guemes get mowed regularly? Will the Guemes side parking lot get maintained/updated? Will the ferry crew get a decent contract? (Please see Steve Orsini's comments in LineTime.org) This proposal seems incredibly unreasonable. I will look for ways to limit my ferry use if this proposal passes. - Grant Brockmeyer

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** Grant Brockmeyer <ghbroc@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 8, 2023 11:31 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Cc:** ljaniki@co.skagit.wa.us; Peter Browning; Ron Wesen  
**Subject:** Guemes ferry fare increase

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To whom it may concern,

I am a full time resident of Guemes Island. The ferry is essential for basic goods and services much like the county roads are essential to other county communities. I'm a senior citizen who commutes 3 times a week by bicycle. Please allow resident bicyclists to use walk-on punch cards like we currently. Bicycles are part of the foot passenger space on the ferry deck—except in the summer when large groups of cyclists visit for a day (and spend their money in the county on the way to a ride on Guemes), residents are required to keep their bikes in the passenger space and take up no more room than carts and wheelbarrows. We make it work—with the support of the ferry crew, who make sure that safety measures are always complied with!

Additionally, as a county resident I pay property taxes to the county for the maintenance of necessary infrastructure including roads and bridges. If the Guemes ferry is part of the county infrastructure why is it being singled out as something that needs to produce revenue to support itself. What next, tolls on all major county roads?

Finally, I see nothing in the new fare package to accommodate the needs of the many low income residents of the island who have lived here for many years. Not sure what that would look like but many are struggling and a large fare increase would be devastating for them.

Thank you very much,  
Grant Brockmeyer  
4989 Edens Rd  
Anacortes, WA 98221

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** mcalistkg <mcalistkg@frontier.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 10:26 AM  
**To:** Ferry Comments; Commissioners; Guemes Island Ferry Committee  
**Subject:** Proposed Fare Structure for Guemes Ferry

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As a retired teacher on a fixed income, the proposed fares will create a significant hardship on my budget. The report by kpff failed to consider the impact of the proposed increase on Guemes residents. Ferry usage will decrease drastically because we simply cannot afford to ride the ferry. Those who commute for work each day will have to consider leaving the island for good. Businesses that provide services to the island will either pass the extra cost directly to islanders or will stop doing business here.

I believe everyone on the island is willing to absorb a reasonable increase but the proposed fares are not reasonable or fair.

Please take more time with your decision and include input from our ferry committee (elected to represent the people of the island) and from the those who are most directly affected.

Greta McAlister

## Jennifer Rogers

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**From:** guemes22 <guemes22@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 1:43 PM  
**To:** Ferry Comments  
**Subject:** Guemes ferry rate increase

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As a home owner on guemes island I am opposed to the increased ferry rates that are being proposed. These increases will create a financial hardship for islanders who use the ferry to get to their place of work or for shopping in town. The reduction in service that has been mentioned is really just a threat and is completely unprofessional by the county staff.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone