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The Fix Our Ferries citizen action movement, which now includes representative groups from Vashon Island, the San Juan Islands, and Bremerton, has come together to press for legislative action during the 2025 budget session to address the years-long ferry crisis.

This transportation crisis affects the economic health and quality of life of people and businesses across the state. Fruit from Yakima rots on Seattle docks. Delivery drivers from all regions rack up relentless overtime. Tourists both to and from communities stop traveling. Residents are stranded and scramble for childcare, ambulances are delayed on hospital runs, patients miss critical medical treatments, school districts lose students, residents are losing wages, and businesses across the state are losing employees and income. Our communities are sinking under the combined impacts.

This crisis is far from over. True recovery of our state's marine highway system can only begin with adequate investment. Fix our Ferries has come together to support three core priorities:

**Funding to build one new boat annually, in addition to the new boats currently out for bid:** it is vital that the state commit to funding construction of one new ferry boat each year for the next decade. While only five new boats are out to bid, barely bringing the system to par, several boats are already at the end of their lifespan. Six Issaquah class boats are rapidly aging out, are already well into maintenance risk, and will come to the end of their useful life by 2040. Our infrastructure is on the verge of collapse. We must invest now. This is a necessary measure to bring the WSF fleet back to even minimum service capacity. This consistent investment should also result in cost savings with builders and provide the stability needed to run a reliable, resilient fleet.

**Adequate funding for competitive crew wages and benefits:** boats go nowhere without crew to run them. To improve both recruitment and retention, it is vital that WSF crew members receive competitive wages. This need is shockingly urgent as waves of retirements are anticipated to continue rolling through the system. Staffing is already so thin that even one engineer calling out cannot be absorbed, and vital runs are cancelled. Crews are stretched beyond capacity on overtime. WSF cannot compete with other domestic marine markets, public or private. By offering competitive compensation, we can attract and retain skilled workers, ensuring that the ferries remain operational and reliable.

**Greater data and decision-making transparency from WSF:** our communities deserve greater transparency from WSF in data reporting and decision-making processes. Timely, robust data can be used to create solutions or it can drive obfuscation and frustration. Current data sharing practices often mask the true impacts of service cancellations on specific communities, leaving residents and stakeholders without a clear understanding of the challenges and potential solutions. Aggregate data does not tell the true story of individual runs. Transparent and accurate reporting is essential for building trust and making informed decisions that benefit all parties involved.

Our citizen action groups, representing multiple ferry-served communities, all agree that these three investments are vital starting points to truly address the crisis on our marine highways. While this list is not

comprehensive of our individual needs, it is a core starting point to restore reliability and resiliency in the system.

We will continue working throughout the summer and fall to build support from key regional stakeholders and advocates for these important priorities.

Thank you for your investment in the future of this essential and iconic Washington transit resource.

Islanders for Ferry Action (Vashon)  
Ferry Lovers of Washington (San Juan Islands)  
Community Water Taxi (San Juan Islands)  
Bremerton Ferry Coalition (Bremerton)

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