



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Contact: Kris Faucett, (206)652-9506

For Immediate Release

### **Ferry District reduces property tax for 2010 while preserving existing service**

*Deferral of ferry demonstration routes frees up funds for  
more than 180,000 hours of Metro Transit bus service*

The King County Ferry District Board of Supervisors voted unanimously today to reduce the Ferry District levy for 2010, limiting King County Water Taxi service to the two existing routes serving West Seattle and Vashon Island from downtown Seattle. Demonstration projects that were being explored will be postponed.

“In light of tight economic times and the transit crisis King County is facing, these savings will allow us to preserve bus service,” said King County Councilmember Jane Hague, sponsor of the proposal. “Estimates show that these savings could translate into more than 180,000 hours of bus service.”

“By sharply reducing the property tax levy for ferries, we are able to prioritize preserving basic bus service without raising taxes during this tough economic time for King County families,” said Boardmember Larry Phillips. “Using reserves to preserve existing passenger ferry service while using levy dollars to stabilize bus service gives us time to have a vital regional conversation about the future of our entire transit system.”

“This action allows us to continue service on the popular West Seattle route which will be a lifeline for many commuters once construction begins on the Alaskan Way Viaduct,” said Ferry District Chair Dow Constantine. “The Ferry District will be seeking mitigation funding from the state to help expand this service during the construction period.”

The adopted levy lowers the property tax rate for the Ferry District to \$1.18 million, translating to approximately 1/3 of one cent per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to be collected in 2010. This new rate amounts to approximately \$1.20

per year for a \$400,000 home. The original rate, set in 2007, was 5.5 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

The Ferry District's levy reduction action provides the option to the King County Council to add a property tax for Metro Transit bus service to offset proposed bus service reductions, without additional financial impacts to King County taxpayers.

"Our county government, like governments across the country, is experiencing a financial crisis. Shrinking dollars force us to make difficult decisions, and the Ferry District acted today to prioritize essential bus transit service over passenger-only ferry demonstration routes," said Boardmember Julia Patterson. "Providing residents of five cities with potential ferry routes just doesn't rise to the same level of importance as supplying 118 million yearly bus trips to riders all over King County."

"During these tough economic times, it is appropriate for the Ferry District to use its reserves to stay afloat," said Boardmember Bob Ferguson. "Today's vote prioritizes our most essential services."

"During the economic downturn, it is important to hold down property taxes for our residents while also prioritizing scarce public dollars for sustaining bus service," said Boardmember Kathy Lambert.

Today's action allows the Ferry District to continue existing service including the popular West Seattle route, which will become a lifeline for many commuters once construction begins on the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The District will be seeking mitigation funds for that service to offset the impacts of viaduct construction.

The King County Ferry District is a special purpose government created to provide passenger ferry service in King County. The Ferry District's Board of Supervisors is composed of the members of the King County Council. The King County Marine Division operates the service under the name King County Water Taxi.

For more information about the King County Ferry District visit [www.kingcountyferries.org](http://www.kingcountyferries.org).

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