



San Juan County Ferry Advisory Committee

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Friday Harbor, WA 98250
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San Juan County Council:
District 1, Bob Jarman
District 2, Rick Hughes
District 3, Jamie Stephens

July 8, 2013

Washington State Transportation Commission
PO Box 47308
Olympia, WA 98504-7308

Dear Members of the Transportation Commission,

The San Juan County Ferry Advisory Committee appreciates and supports the proposed round-trip fare between Friday Harbor and Sidney. This will be welcomed by both residents and visitors, and avoids the current inequity in the one-way fares.

The conundrum has been that fares to the San Juan Islands are round-trip and collected in Anacortes, while fares between Anacortes and Sidney are necessarily one-way because many travelers make a grand loop riding WSF, Black Ball, and BC ferries. And of course the trip from Anacortes to Sidney passes through the San Juan Islands, with a stop in Friday Harbor each way, once per day. So there are many different travel options.

Travelers from Friday Harbor currently pay the appropriate one-way fare from Friday Harbor to Sidney, but are basically charged double for the return trip, and must pay the full fare to Anacortes. The reason is that island fares are round trip, and fares are not collected from Friday Harbor to Anacortes. This is not a "free trip" however, folks who traveled to the islands from Anacortes have already pre-paid the return to Anacortes.

So charging the full-fare to Anacortes is appropriate for travelers who started their trip in Sidney, but means that folks returning to Friday Harbor are charged twice for a Friday Harbor-Anacortes leg that they can use only once. The answer is to simply offer an appropriately-priced round-trip fare between Friday Harbor and Sidney, which was our request.

The request for an additional round-trip fare has become a "consolidation", but after consideration and receiving public input we strongly recommend that the one-way fare be retained, in addition to the proposed round-trip fare, in order to provide travel flexibility. Not everyone returns the same way they traveled out. And just as no one likes paying twice, no one likes having to pay a fare that they cannot use.

The appropriate one-way fare from Friday Harbor to Sidney would simply be half of the proposed round-trip fare, and the return one-way fare from Sidney to Friday Harbor would be the same as the Sidney-Anacortes fare (as it is currently). This is appropriate because travelers who start from Sidney would not have pre-paid for the Friday Harbor-Anacortes leg.

The Sidney fares are necessarily complex because of the mix of travelers, destinations and available routes, and the combination of round-trip and one-way fares. We appreciate and support the goal of fare simplification, but feel that fare equity needs to have a higher priority.

For these reasons we respectfully request that the one-way fares (with adjustments as noted) be retained in addition to the proposed round-trip fare between Friday Harbor and Sidney. This will provide the needed flexibility for all travelers.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Jim Corenman, Chairman, San Juan Island Representative

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Larry Vandermay, Orcas Island Representative

John Whetten, Lopez Island Representative

John Brantigan, Shaw Island Representative

Rick Hughes, Council Representative

Deborah Hopkins, Visitors Representative

Pat McKay, Commercial Representative