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June 12th, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased today to write in strong support of Kitsap County Public Transportation Benefit Area Authority's (Kitsap Transit) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration's Fiscal Year 2024 Passenger Ferry Grant Program. This funding, if awarded, would support the Kitsap Transit Fast Ferry Passenger Only Replacement Vessel proposal, a crucial initiative that would address the challenges posed by the outdated MV Finest, Kitsap Transit's current passenger-only fast ferry vessel.

Built in 1996, the MV Finest was the first vessel purchased by Kitsap Transit to begin high-capacity passenger only service from Kingston, WA to downtown Seattle, WA. The MV Finest, a used vessel from an East Coast operator, refurbished and placed into service in 2018, has met the end of her useful life and needs to be replaced. In use for more than 25 years of continuous service, MV Finest has reached its limits of both repairs and refurbishments and requires replacement. The Kitsap Transit Fast Ferry Passenger Only Replacement Vessel proposal proposes to replace the MV Finest with a new vessel equipped with EPA Tier 4 engines, which are the strictest requirement that regulates the amount of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides that can be emitted from a marine engine. The vessel will have modern, reliable propulsion systems that will provide better value to the public, extending the useful service life far beyond what could be achieved with repair of the MV Finest.

The success of this project will fortify Kitsap Transit's vital transportation network and enable it to continue to provide sustainable and reliable mobility and equitable multimodal connections along the Kingston-Seattle route for the foreseeable future. It is for these reasons that I strongly support Kitsap Transit's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration's Fiscal Year 2024 Passenger Ferry Grant Program, and I urge your fair and full consideration of their proposal. Should you have any questions, please contact Emma Abraham in my Tacoma district office at Emma.Abraham@mail.house.gov or 253-272-3515.

Sincerely,



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress