



## **San Juan County Economic Development Council**

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Dear Council Members:

The San Juan County Economic Development Council (EDC) has completed its Ferry Fare Study Report. The Study attempts to begin to understand the economic impact of recent Ferry Fare increases by the Washington State Ferry System on the San Juan County economy. Upon completion of the study, the EDC Board has discussed the study data three times, as well as possible conclusions and recommendations. At our most recent meeting in July, the Board decided to attach a cover letter to the study with four recommendations.

The San Juan County Economic Development Council recommends:

1. The Friday Harbor Town Council and the San Juan County Council officially accept this study as their Ferry Fare Study;
2. The San Juan County Council adopts a resolution directing staff to take the appropriate steps to join the Skagit & Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). After reviewing the study, it is clear to the EDC Board that participation in the existing regional planning organization accomplishes three critical objectives – San Juan County becomes a part of a regional “voice” on transportation issues to State and Federal legislators, the County has access to federal funds for transportation and scenic by-ways projects, and the County gains funds for a transportation planning coordinator.
3. The San Juan County Council develops a partnership with the Governor’s tourism commission with the purpose of jointly demonstrating the importance of the ferry system to the economic vitality of the State (and San Juan County in particular) and put into place a mechanism for follow-up and tracking of visitors to the State and County;
4. The Friday Harbor Town Council and the San Juan County Council should work together to investigate an institutional and permanent “vehicle” by which to regularly communicate our regional transportation issues to our local State legislators and the State Legislature in general.

The San Juan County Economic Development Council believes the time has long passed when San Juan County can passively wait for decisions to be made by the State that affect our community and

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then to react in response. It is time to become proactive in determining the future direction of regional transportation, it being such a key element to our local economy, and our overall community quality of life.

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