




MEMORANDUM

TO: Whatcom County Council

FROM: Satpal Sidhu, Whatcom County Executive 

RE: Veto of Ordinance 2023-045 amending Chapter 10.34 Ferry Rates

DATE: August 9, 2023

I am writing to inform you that I am exercising my power of veto per Whatcom County Charter 3.22(f) on Ordinance 2023-045 Amending Chapter 10.34 Ferry Rates. My written objections are provided in this memorandum.

1. The County's designated advisory body, the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC), was unable to convene to provide its recommendations on the code changes proposed in the Ordinance. The adoption of code changes without any formal recommendation from LIFAC shows disregard for the County's longstanding tradition of soliciting public input through our advisory boards and commissions.
2. Statements by Councilmembers and the Executive's Office created a community expectation that there would be a pause in consideration until the advisory body was reconstituted and a policy discussion was held in the Public Works and Health Committee. The vote to approve the Ordinance at the July 25 meeting upended those expectations.

As I mentioned in [my memo from July 31](#), the Lummi Island community has been on a roller-coaster ride. This veto is meant to put the brakes on that roller-coaster and restore public trust.

I appreciate that County Council has the authority to override my objections. My veto is an expression of my dissatisfaction with the process of consideration. I also acknowledge that the responsibility for this process is shared by the executive branch and legislative branch of County Government.

I hope that Council, as our policy and legislative body, will work with LIFAC to ensure that County code related to ferry rates reflects the interests of our constituents, both on the island and across the County.