

SIDNEY, B.C., FERRY RUN SAVED

AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS of meetings, marketing and paperwork, the ferry run between Anacortes and Sidney, British Columbia, has been saved.

This link between Washington state and Canada was threatened earlier this year when Washington State Ferries and Gov. Christine Gregoire proposed to eliminate it to save money.

This route was chosen out of the many that Washington State Ferries runs because it's the lowest-traffic route it has high fuel costs, said David Moseley, assistant transportation secretary.

Since the proposal to eliminate the run, committees in Anacortes and Sidney have been working hard to convince lawmakers and Washington State Ferries of its importance with a Save Our Ferries campaign.

"The Sidney ferry is a key driver to the Anacortes economy," said Mitch Everton, executive director of the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce. "The Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC) report showed that the economic benefits more than cover operating expenses. We are thrilled that the legislature has kept the run in the budget."

The EDASC report showed that the ferry affects, directly and indirectly, some 1,470 jobs with more than \$30 million in annual payroll and nearly \$126 million in annual spending in counties, including Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan and Snohomish. The ferry route also pays \$4.6 million in taxes to the state of Washington every year.

The state legislature agreed with the argument that this specific ferry route actually constitutes a net economic gain, therefore saving the run.

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