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King County Transportation Event w/ Dow Constantine
September 3, 2013

Prepared Remarks:

Good morning. Thank you all for being here today.

From my first day on the job as governor of this great state, I've called for passage of a comprehensive transportation package to ensure Washington's long-term economic vitality. In my inaugural address, I said no economic strategy would be complete without a transportation plan.

Throughout one regular and two special sessions, I kept pushing legislators to get this done and send a transportation package for me to sign.

I was not alone in my efforts. Leaders from the business, labor, environmental, and local government communities stood with me and expressed support for such a package.

Legislators from both sides of the aisle stood with me as well. But instead of moving forward with a package that would mean more jobs, improved safety, congestion relief and greater accountability, the legislature ultimately adjourned without getting a vote in the Senate.

However, the need for action is increasingly urgent. Our state's transportation challenges aren't going away. Businesses east and west of the Cascades need to move goods quickly and efficiently. Moms and Dads want to spend less time stuck in traffic, and more time with their families.

I've been talking with Dow this morning about King County's pressing transportation needs.

If a revenue package is not approved by 2014, King County Metro could face up to 17% cuts in bus service—that equates to the elimination of 1 out of 5 bus routes.



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I know how important bus service is, because I used to ride the #5 bus every day as a student at UW. And Trudi took the bus to work as well.

My conversations with people throughout the state have shown that transportation isn't just King County's problem – and it isn't just up to King County to find a solution.

Across Washington state, our valuable public assets – our roads, bridges, ferries and ports – are deteriorating.

It's important to Yakima County that we reduce congestion in King County so they can get their apples get to the port.

It's important for our state's continued aerospace leadership, and the tens of thousands of jobs in that sector, that we invest in our I-405 and Snohomish County Freight corridors.

And it's important to the men and women in in our construction sector who are ready to get to work on these projects as soon as a package is passed.

I'm here today because I'm an optimist. This state built the replacement span for the Skagit River Bridge in 27 days. When the will is there, we can get things done.

The support is there from the business community. And legislators have indicated a willingness to listen. I stand ready to work with them in a bipartisan fashion to move a transportation package forward and get it over the finish line this time.

I will continue talking with legislative leaders about what that package looks like, and how we get it done.

If the leaders in both chambers can show that the consensus is there, that the votes are still there in the House, and that the Senate is ready to act, I'm prepared to call a special session to pass a package in November.



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This would be a package that:

...continues progress on what we've already started;
...addresses our critical maintenance needs; and
...funds a balanced and multi-modal system.

Let me be clear – we need three things to get a transportation package passed in a November special session:

ONE, we need serious and authentic intent from both sides of the aisle and both chambers.

TWO, we need everyone involved to be solution-oriented, and willing to compromise.

And THREE, we need a deal that gets the votes necessary to send it to my desk.

In the coming weeks, I'll be going on the road and visiting people in their communities to talk about the infrastructure needs across our state. I look forward to these conversations.

Like I said – I'm an optimist. We can get this done. Our economy depends on it. Our quality of life depends on it. And the future of six and a half million – and growing – Washingtonians depends on it.

A King County-only transportation solution is not a solution at all. We need a statewide, 21st Century transportation system for all of Washington, and we need it soon.

Now I'd like to turn it over to Dow. Thank you.