

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with your local news and commentary for Friday, December 1, 2023.

Members of the Washington State Ferries (WSF) Office of Sustainability and Environmental Services (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/washington-state-ferries/about-us/environment>), their galley vendor Sodexo (<https://us.sodexo.com/home.html>), Seattle Public Utilities (<https://www.seattle.gov/utilities>), and waste management company Recology (<https://www.recology.com/>) recently conducted a vessel waste audit at Colman Dock in Seattle. The audit covered all waste generated from three ferries serving the Seattle terminal over a 24-hour period, which totaled more than 1,100 pounds! The goal was to gain clues on the public and staff's general waste disposal and collection behaviors. This data will be used to make recommendations for an upcoming waste management plan to reduce waste, recycle, reuse, and compost. WSF's Sustainability Action Plan for 2023 through 2025 outlines our ferry system's efforts to be a zero-waste organization.

Wednesday, U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Patty Murray (D-WA) announced that Washington State Ferries (WSF) has received \$4.8 million in federal funding to refurbish passenger areas on six aging boats in its ferry fleet. The grant will pay for upgrades on all six of WSF's Issaquah Class Vessels, originally constructed between 1979 and 1982 and currently serves travelers in Fauntleroy, Vashon, Southworth, Mukilteo, Clinton, Anacortes, and the San Juan Islands. Funds came from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) 2023 Ferry Programs Grants. The Washington State Department of Transportation is providing an additional \$960,000 for the project.

Senator Cantwell said, "Our ferry system is a critical part of our transportation network and ridership is growing. With this money, Washington State Ferries will extend the useful life of six vessels by five to ten years, which will help improve service reliability throughout the ferry system."

This project will extend the useful life of the vessels and improve passenger amenities, allowing for more space between passengers in high-occupancy areas. The benefits will be primarily felt by the increasing number of walk-on riders on the ferry system. Each of these six ships can carry 90 to 124 vehicles and up to 1,200 passengers per trip. The vessels receiving upgrades are:

- MV Issaquah (1979)
- MV Kittitas (1980): Serving Fauntleroy/Southworth/Vashon
- MV Kitsap (1980): Serving Mukilteo/Clinton
- MV Cathlamet (1981): Serving Fauntleroy/Southworth/Vashon
- MV Chelan (1981): Serving Anacortes/San Juan Islands
- MV Sealth (1982)

In Fiscal Year 2022, only 43% of the 21 WSF vessels met the target for State of Good Repair. Also, the accumulating maintenance backlog has resulted in pervasive service disruptions. From July 2019 to June 2023, each of the six vessels was out of operation in shipyards for an average of 3.12 months each year. Without refurbishment, vessels will continue to deteriorate, and service disruptions will become even more commonplace. The project will extend the useful life of these aging for another five to 10 years.

You can find out about other ways Washington State Ferries is moving to upgrade the ferry fleet and recruit more mariners, by listening to a recent County Connections show from November 17. Jim Burke and co-host

County Commissioner Kate Dean spoke with John Vezina, Director of Planning, Customer, and Government Relations at Washington State Ferries, about those efforts (<https://kptz.org/2023/11/17/county-connections-16/>).

AND, if you are thinking you might have missed the deadline to ask Dr. Allison Berry a question for the BOCC health report this Monday, December 4, guess again! She said in an email to KPTZ, “I’ve been invited to speak on the Governor’s panel on fentanyl and overdoses in the state on Monday December 4 at 10am. I should go even though it conflicts with our normal 1st Monday public health update. Would it be possible to move the update to the second Monday in December?”

The County Commissioners agreed, and so the monthly BOCC health report will be Monday, December 11 at 9:45am and broadcast live on KPTZ during The Jim B. Show, so listeners have until next Friday, December 8 at noon to ask public-health-related questions of Dr. Berry or Director of Emergency Management Willie Bence.

And Jim B. will not be hosting his show this coming Monday OR December 11, and he should know, because this reporter is actually Jim B. (And he rarely talks about himself in the third person, but you must admit you just leaned a little closer to the radio...)

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.