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CITY OF SEATTLE  
MAYOR'S OFFICE

February 11, 2011

Hon. Mike McGinn  
Mayor, City of Seattle  
600 Fourth Avenue, 7th Floor  
Seattle, WA 98124

Re: Your Potential Veto of the Bored Tunnel Ordinance (117101)

Dear Mayor McGinn,

As you know, the City Council has recently adopted Ordinance 117101, which approves certain agreements between the State of Washington and the City of Seattle relating to the Alaskan Way Bored Tunnel and improvements to City streets, the waterfront and the state's Moving Forward projects. As members of the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Stakeholders Committee in 2007 and 2008, we studied many issues associated with the replacement and helped select the Bored Tunnel as one of three final options and the one now being implemented.

Today we are coming together to urge you to not to exercise a veto this Ordinance.

While we respect your preferences for a different Viaduct replacement approach, this compromise is the only feasible way to move forward. It's been ten years since the Nisqually quake shook the Viaduct. Since then, 700 community meetings have been held, 15,000 public comments have been registered. We believe there has more than enough Seattle process.

Since you did not personally participate in the Viaduct Stakeholder process in 2008, we would like to give you a little context on why we believe it is time to move forward and not try to further delay this process with a veto. During much of the Stakeholder process, WSDOT assumed it would build all the components of the project and concluded that, within its initial budget, only a rebuilt Viaduct or a surface-roadway idea might be technically and financially feasible. Those, including yourself, who now assert that the stakeholders as a group strongly supported a surface-roadway idea are either misinformed or missing some important history. Whether one liked these two ideas or not (and very few of the stakeholders supported either a rebuild or surface-roadway idea), most of us recognized that in real life it was highly unlikely either of these ideas could ever actually happen, given the massive opposition from many critical constituencies in the city, region, and state. Given this reality, we then took a more serious look at a bored tunnel solution. At our December 11, 2008 meeting, 23 of 24 stakeholders asked the state to consider the bored tunnel as a third option.

The City, County and Port of Seattle then worked to develop a partnership with the state to help fund different components of the Viaduct replacement program. It was clear that this partnership commitment met the tunnel project's funding requirements. It was equally clear, that under a surface-roadway scenario, our city would have risked losing \$2.4 billion in state money that was

already on the table. That would have left local taxpayers on the hook for the entire project costs, amounting to billions of dollars that our city didn't have.

The fact that the cost of bored tunnels around the world were coming down substantially in recent years and that tunnel experts told WSDOT that a less costly single-bore approach was feasible also helped. As we took a closer look at the bored tunnel, we realized it had five major benefits, which remain to this day: 1) it avoids dumping 110,000 vehicles each day from the existing Viaduct onto city streets and I-5, and 4,000 to 6,000 trucks on to 2nd and 4th Avenues, an outcome which would create unacceptable congestion every day for all vehicles including regional transit services, force removal of bike lanes on these streets, and create an unhealthy pedestrian environment downtown; 2) it allows dozens of waterfront businesses to stay open – which would have been closed under any other option; 3) it allows people and goods to use this existing essential north-south regional corridor right up to the day the Tunnel opens; 4) it creates thousands of construction jobs when we need them most and provides long-term regional economic benefits on one of our most important transportation corridors; and 5) it creates a once-in-a-generation opportunity to open up the central waterfront into a magnificent park for Seattle citizens and visitors, pedestrians and cyclists. According to Gehl Architects, a respected and independent consultant that advised the stakeholder process, any other option would have severely deteriorated the waterfront and downtown's fragile urban landscape. Finally, the tunnel reduces construction along this major truck route through the waterfront area.

Based on these benefits and the infeasibility of the surface-roadway and rebuild ideas, the Governor, County Executive, Port CEO and Mayor selected the bored tunnel as their preferred alternative and successfully persuaded the state legislature in 2009 to authorize its funding and construction subject to the completion of the environmental review process. Since that time WSDOT has completed a lengthy RFP process, and selected and signed an on-budget contract with an international design-build team which is proceeding with preliminary design and planning.

The City Council has taken 10 months, retained its own independent experts on key topics, had 18 public meetings and conducted extensive due diligence of its own leading up its adoption of the Ordinance. The Ordinance has many provisions which protect City residents, ensure that the City will not be responsible for any Tunnel overruns should they occur, and otherwise ensure that the City will be at the table on every key step of the planning and construction process. As this is a state project which could proceed with or without the city's permission or approval, all a veto would accomplish is to take away the protection and guarantees the Ordinance gives the City – in our opinion, a veto would not be a good idea.

The City Council was very clear in November, 2009 in unanimously establishing as City policy its support for proceeding with the Bored Tunnel as its preferred alternative and its commitment to work with the State, Port and King County to move forward. Prior to your election, you publicly committed to carrying out the will of the Council, even though you personally preferred another idea. We appreciate that you may have your own preferences and views, but respectfully ask you to now adhere to your earlier and very clear commitment to abide by the Council's November 2009 commitment to the Bored Tunnel by not exercising a veto of the February 7 Ordinance and the three agreements with WSDOT.

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We believe that the time has long passed to second guess the bored tunnel decision made by the Governor, state legislature, County, Port and past and present City Councils. Whether or not it was our initial choice, all of us agree that the citizens of Seattle, the region, and state are best served by moving forward.

We would request an opportunity for some of us to meet with you personally prior to your decision on a veto to discuss these issues further. Please contact Bob Donegan at 206-587-6500 whether you are willing to meet with some of us early next week. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Warren Aakervik  
Interbay/BINMIC

Carol Binder  
Former Executive Director, Pike Place Market

John Coney  
Queen Anne resident

Mahlon Clements  
Ballard/Fremont

Bob Donegan  
Seattle Historic Waterfront Coalition

Don Newby  
Southwest King County

David Freiboth  
Executive Secretary  
Martin Luther King  
County Labor Council

Jim O'Halloran  
Northeast Seattle

John Odland  
Manufacturing Industrial Council

John Pehrson  
Belltown

Vlad Oustimovitch  
West Seattle

Earl Richardson  
Southeast Seattle

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Robert Sexton  
Board of Directors of the Downtown  
Seattle Association

Peter Spaulding  
West Seattle

Herald Ugles  
International Longshore and Warehouse  
Union

Todd Vogel  
Former Allied Arts Chair and Chair of NW  
Sustainability Collective

Tayloe Washburn  
Former Chair of the Board  
Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce