

4/1/04

Ms. Allison Ray  
AWV Project  
999 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue 2424  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Ms. Ray:

I-040-001

In regard to draft environmental impact statements concerning alternatives for the Alaskan Way Viaduct, I wish to go on record as strongly opposed to any option that includes a widened surface highway along the Seattle waterfront. Such a thing would be an environmental and urban monstrosity, cutting off the city from its waterfront far more effectively than the present viaduct does—not to mention its ancient predecessor, the much-maligned Railroad Avenue, with its mass of congested railroad tracks! Resultant low-lying pollution, noise, and side-street traffic would further degrade the waterfront district. A widened surface highway along the waterfront would be a blight and a disaster.

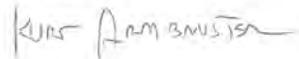
I-040-002

I have serious doubts about the safety of a tunnel along the waterfront, given the nature of the topography and likelihood of serious earthquakes in our area.

I-040-003

I believe that cost, engineering, and environmental factors combine in favor of duplicating the present viaduct, to modern seismic standards. In a perfect world, there would be no highway along the waterfront at all, but the Alaskan Way Viaduct is something several generations have been accustomed to, and the traffic needs of the region have come to depend heavily upon. I therefore favor the in-kind rebuilding option for the viaduct, with continued use of the existing Battery Street Tunnel.

Sincerely,



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#### I-040-001

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments and recognize your objections to a widened surface highway along the waterfront.

#### I-040-002

The preferred Bored Tunnel Alternative is a safe alternative. Generally, structural engineers agree that tunnels are one of the safest places to be during an earthquake, because the tunnel moves with the earth. No Seattle tunnels were damaged during the 2001 Nisqually earthquake, including the Mt. Baker and Mercer Island I-90 tunnels, Battery Street Tunnel, Third Avenue Bus Tunnel, and Burlington Northern Tunnel.

The bored tunnel would be built to current seismic standards, which are considerably more stringent than what was in place when the viaduct was built in the early 1950s. The bored tunnel design includes improving relatively soft, liquefiable soils found near the south tunnel portal. Emergency exits would be provided every 650 feet in the tunnel. Project engineers have studied current data on global warming and possible sea level rise and concluded that the seawall provides enough room to protect the tunnel from rising sea levels. The engineers also considered the possible threat of tsunamis during the design process.

#### I-040-003

FHWA, WSDOT, and the City of Seattle appreciate receiving your comments on the Rebuild Alternative. After studying several retrofitting concepts, the lead agencies found that rebuilding the viaduct would not be a cost-effective, long-term solution that adequately addresses the risks to public safety and the weakened state of the viaduct. Elements of the Rebuild and Aerial Alternatives were incorporated into the Elevated Structure Alternative, which was analyzed in the 2006 Supplemental Draft EIS and the Final EIS. Because the project has evolved since

comments were submitted in 2004, please refer to the Final EIS for current information.