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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4702

ARMED SERVICES

October 11, 2012

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor of the State of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I am writing in support of Whatcom County's request for funding for the Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility. The project is located along a significant state shoreline on the western edge of Birch Bay. I personally toured the project area within the last year with Mr. Roland Middleton, Whatcom County Special Projects Manager, and Pete Kremen, former Whatcom County Executive. This project will benefit both the local community as well as the natural environment. I strongly support allocating public funds to expedite and aid this endeavor.

Whatcom County is seeking funding for this project to:

- Remove the rip rap, sea walls, groins, and bulkheads along Birch Bay Drive and replace them with a "natural" soft shore beach; reestablishing the beach profile and improving flood protection for the roadway and adjacent structures; this will improve habitat functions and the currently disrupted natural littoral drift of the beach.
- Replace and retrofit substandard storm water facilities and out falls to improve water quality for this significant shellfish area.
- Provide beach access and a pedestrian facility as a portion of the Coast Millennium Trail.
- Implement the goals of the Birch Bay Community Plan to underground the utilities along this portion of Birch Bay Drive.

Significant local support exists for this project including Whatcom County Executive Jack Louws, the Whatcom County Council and the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, the Washington State Department of Ecology has recognized the importance of this project supporting environmental improvements to the bay, shoreline and other areas. This project will better allow residents of Washington's 2nd district to enjoy the Birch Bay shoreline while causing minimal impact to the surrounding environment.

I ask for your consideration of this capital appropriation request. If you have any questions, please contact David Westbrook on my staff at 360-733-4500 or david.westbrook@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

