

JTC

Work Session

Burlington, WA. 10/24/12

Madam chairs and Committee members thank you for allowing me to address you on this very important subject.

I am a member of ILWU local 19 in Seattle and the current president of the Puget Sound District Council of the ILWU.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union local 19 is the labor union that provides labor to the customers who load and unload cargo and cruise ships in the port of Seattle. Local 19 consists of 884 registered members who enjoy the benefits of a family wage plus health and pension benefits. We also have a pool of over 2,000 fully trained casual workers who help fill the peaks of the ports workload. Our casual work force is also paid a good family wage.

Our work force is highly trained and skilled in the operation of discharging and loading ships safely and efficiently for the ports customers.

95% of our members come to our hiring hall and get a job on a daily basis. If a ship works one or two days they may be called back on that particular ship until it sets sail. Otherwise most jobs are for one day only. The system is set up to be very flexible for the ports customers. The customers are only required to hire workers when they need them and the ILWU is required to provide skilled labor 24/7, which we do. Our members depend on the ability to get from the hiring hall to the docks efficiently and safely.

Our members' jobs in the port of Seattle depend on the ability of the port to attract customers to the port. Once the customers are here it is our job to turn the ships as quickly as possible so that the cargo can be sent to its final

destination whether it is by rail or by road. Any hiccup in the process may discourage a customer from calling on the port. No ships no jobs.

The Port of Seattle is just one part of our international trade infrastructure in the Puget Sound. The ports of Tacoma and Everett are also key links in the system that attracts trade to the region. Developers have speculated that the region would benefit by moving all cargo operations to Tacoma and redeveloping the land in the SoDo area. These short sighted comments are motivated by greed and not based on reality. Yes. Currently The Port of Seattle has some extra capacity but that will most likely be short lived if history is any indicator. The industry tends to swing like a pendulum and as the economy recovers there will be a need for all the ports in the region. We must not plan for redeveloping the ports but must plan ahead like the Port of Seattle has done with the Century Agenda. Much has been made about the move of the Grand Alliance shipping group from Seattle to Tacoma, and their decision was based on many factors, but I do believe that the proposed arena *did* have an influence on the shipping lines decision, you cannot have the perception that a city does not want to operate as a port and still attract customers. The fact is that the region needs all the current port terminals operating in the state to service the region and the nation in the future.

ILWU local 19 feels that building an NBA/NHL arena plus the development of a planned entertainment district in the SoDo area would be detrimental to the ports ability to attract customers and would put our members out of work.

The proposed site for the arena/entertainment district is a mere few blocks from Terminals 46 and 30 which account for one third of the ports capacity. If those docks are unable to operate efficiently we lose one third of the work in the port. This not only affects the dock workers but will affect Puget Sound pilots, tug boat operators, maintenance workers, truck drivers and the businesses who service these trades.

The proposed site is within the Stadium Transition Overlay District which was originally established to “encourage pedestrian connections to downtown while discouraging encroachment on nearby industrial uses” (see SR519 Timeline 2000 second bullet). The intent was never intended for another stadium but to allow

transit connections and a buffer from industry. The transition overlay district is now being incorrectly referred to as the “Stadium District”.

Currently there are traffic issues especially on event days. In addition to the current issues we still do not know what the full effects of the tunnel will have on the area.

The Edgar Martinez/Atlantic St. corridor was built as phase 1 of the SR 519 freight corridor. It was built with funding from many sources including the port to move freight from the piers. The original project had 3 phases with phase 2 being a dedicated ramp to the interstates on Royal Brougham (see original phase 2 design). Edgar Martinez way was to be a one way east bound corridor from the waterfront to the interstate and Royal Brougham was to be a one way corridor to the waterfront off of the interstate.

In 2002 after 30% of the design work for phase 2 was complete (see Timeline 2002) plans had to be changed due the fact that the city allowed a hotel to be built at the corner of Royal Brougham and 1st avenue and other issues that arose.

So instead of having 2 grade crossings with four lanes of capacity each that connected the waterfront with the interstate plans were changed to the current configuration (see SR519 Intermodal Access Project option B) of Edgar Martinez way as a two way street with 2 eastbound and 2 westbound lanes.

The net result is 50% less capacity.

Another project that we were looking forward to was the Lander street overpass. Those funds were diverted to the Mercer Street corridor.

The end result is that to address the *current* issues three grade crossings over the BNSF mainline were promised and we wound up with one that is not accessible to freight on many event days.

Many members of local 19 are diehard sports fans, and the members of local 19 are 100% behind bringing back the NBA to the region, but we have brought this issue to the ranks of our membership twice and both times they have voted NO to building an arena at the proposed location.

Building an arena and entertainment district in SoDo will adversely affect the ability of our members and the members of the other maritime trades in the port to make a family wage living.

You can build an arena almost anywhere but you cannot pack up and move a first class deep water marine terminal anywhere.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan McKisson, ILWU