

The Washington Ferry Coalition



www.FerryCoalition.org

Our goal: strengthen and sustain Washington's ferry system



5 New Ferries Needed for Aging Fleet

Washington's ferry system is at a crossroads, where service reliability is beginning to deteriorate despite Washington State Ferries' efforts to prioritize service over other competing needs. Funding challenges over the last decade are becoming more evident as ferry users face an increased number of missed sailings because of vessel mechanical issues and aging infrastructure.

WSF's 2040 Long Range Plan, released in 2018, says that the current ferry-build contract should be extended to build five new Olympic Class ferries as soon as possible to meet the urgent needs of the ferry system.

The time is now. The current fleet only supports about two-thirds of the planned out-of-service maintenance time needed for each vessel, and three more vessels are due for retirement in the next seven years.

Olympic Class vessels are the right type of vessel to begin strengthening the WSF fleet because they are large enough to serve nearly every route in the system. The existing Olympic Class design can be reworked for hybrid electric-diesel propulsion, allowing WSF to meet or exceed its emission reduction targets and make the ferries quieter for Puget Sound orcas.



Reliable Ferry System Critical for Washington

Washington Ferry Coalition members support the WSF Long Range Plan's recommendations for new vessels. A modern, reliable ferry system is the only way to ensure that ferries remain a vital link for transportation, commerce, and the economy, as Washington's marine highway.

Old, outdated vessels are more expensive to operate per-passenger-mile and require significantly more maintenance. Breakdowns result in impacts to the entire system. New ferries are needed not only to replace retiring vessels but also to maintain system reliability when current ferries are out of service.

The state transportation system and ferry communities need reliable ferries, the economy and workers need the jobs that ferry construction provides, and the maritime industry and state need to retain a skilled blue-collar workforce.



Aging WSF Vessels

Between now and 2040, 13 WSF vessels are due for retirement and replacement. Without the state investing in new vessels, there is growing risk to service reliability that accumulates every year. Even with one-for-one replacement as older vessels retire, the current fleet size does not include sufficient relief vessels to support a reliable system or meet increased demand.

Vessel retirement outlook

