

Senator Maria Cantwell

Lummi Island RAISE Grant Event Cantwell Remarks

August 16th, 2022

Cantwell Remarks

[\[AUDIO\]](#)

Senator Cantwell: Thank you so much Executive Sidhu. It's so great to be here in Whatcom County, and it's so good to be here at Lummi Nation. And the Chairman mentioned that he and I had a great conversation just now and I have to come back and spend more time here. And he and I need to work on a variety of issues from hatcheries to marine crab problems, to things that really affect our local economy. And I look forward to doing that, and so appreciate you being here today. Really appreciate it.

And Representative Shewmake, you know this is a partnership between the state and federal government on transportation investment. And I know, you guys made your decisions after we got our big bill done. So we were trying to say, we're going to lead the way and we're going to make these investments, and you guys did too. So thank you so much.

And Executive Sidhu and I have been talking a lot about the challenges in Whatcom County, particularly as it relates to infrastructure, and particularly related to the flooding that we had. And he said, "you know, we'll get to all of those things, and we'll get them done. But I really need this Ferry problem fixed now." And so we heard him, and we heard him loud and clear.

And so many of you know that we were successful in passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, and getting about \$2.2 billion into what is called the RAISE program. And so that took a while for that money then to be prioritized, and to get allocated through the Federal USDOT, the United States Department of Transportation.

So we're very excited about the investments that are being made all across the state of Washington. It's safe to say I've been on the phone with Secretary Buttigieg a lot lately and that's a good sign because he's telling us about the investments. And one investment he just told us about, obviously, is the \$25 million here in Whatcom County for the Lummi Island Ferry.

This is so important because it's part of critical infrastructure, moving 1,000 residents to and from the island in times of which can often be very challenging. And so the ferry needed to be upgraded, and the capacity is being upgraded, the number of cars being doubled, and a significant increase in the amount of passengers.

But as the county executive said, we also get an extra little bonus here and that we are helping to decarbonize the marine environment that we cherish so much by getting this to be a battery electric boat. And so we know that this can be accomplished, we know we want it to be accomplished, and it will be a key factor in the development of the solution to replace the current ferry system.

So all I can say is this has got to be one of the most beautiful parts of the entire world right here. We're so lucky to call it home. And that means that we have to be, as I know the Chairman knows, good

stewards of Mother Earth. And with this Ferry system we will be doing exactly that, being better stewards of Mother Earth and solving some of our transportation and infrastructure problems at the same time.

So thank you all for being here. Thank you to the Public Works and efforts of getting this plan, thank you to the citizen group for getting the voices of citizens heard. And let's continue to work together as a team! As a team to solve our many, many, many challenges as a beautiful place to live, but one that also continues to grow. So thank you all very much. .