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SEA-TAC AIRPORT NOISE AND POLLUTION

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MARCH 23, 2019 BY JC HARRIS

A Letter To Tina Orwall re. Port Package Problems

NB: *Tina Orwall is a State Representative For the 33rd District. This letter is in regard to a conversation I had with her after the 33rd District Democrats Town Hall on March 23, 2019 and the LIUNA Hall in Des Moines.*

Dear Tina,

Just following up on our conversation today re. the Port Packages. To summarise, you promised to convene a task force with the affected city governments at the end of the current State Legislative Session in May and I promised to provide you with any assistance I can, including the list of 160+ cooperating homeowners with failing Port Packages that my group has compiled—including photographs, documentation from the Port Of Seattle and related invoices and contractor invoices, etc.

There are a couple of points I wish to make so that you can better understand the scope of the situation.

First is that there are a ton of people in this town with failing Port Packages. The list I've compiled consists of just

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the ones that I have personally visited and documented—and that's with no advertising. 160 out of 9,400 treated homes. Doesn't that strike you as a bit higher than chance? And these are not minor defects. We're talking cracked windows or frames with so much moisture as to leak and rust. Frames that warp to where they don't close. Mold between the panes that spreads into the walls. Doors that need to be re-hung. And the repair costs are not trivial. To get a *proper* replacement can easily cost a thousand dollars for a simple kitchen window. So a lot of people get 'a deal from a friend'—meaning a look-a-like without the proper noise reducing properties.

Then there are the health issues. I believe there are problems intrinsic to the whole notion of sealing up your home that they just didn't think through or weren't aware of when they came up with these schemes. The Port and the vendors' literature hammers home all the issues of condensation and dust the homeowner should expect. So they must have had some idea. Too many residents complain of the same issues. That *needs* to be addressed.

But beyond that, I can tell you there are serious mold issues in many, many homes. For example, four homes have sold on my block in the past three years. And all four required mold remediation in order to close. That's \$2,200 each. My home has it as well.

What I am asking you to do is refer to the City Of Burien's Resolution #407 (see attached) which describes the legislation I am suggesting. Specifically, Section 3 seeks to repeal **the portion of RCW 53.54.030(5) limiting homeowners to only a single payment for the initial Port Package and then no further payments for maintenance, repair or replacement of any kind.**

Changing these few lines of text are just basic fairness: the Port and the airlines have been getting a forever benefit for a one-time payment. And that one-time payment has turned out to be for a product and service that has created real hardships for homeowners, including all those subsequent homeowners who never signed the Avigation Easements but are forced to live with their effects.

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Now who is looking out for those people? Certainly not the Port. They started indemnifying themselves against damages the moment they began advertising the program. But you should understand that neither are the cities you represent. I have approached the City Councils of Des Moines, SeaTac and Burien to ask them to engage directly with the Port or indirectly via the StART or with you via their lobbyists and been rebuffed at every turn.

You should understand that this has created a state of anger and skepticism among residents that is hard to over-estimate. Those homes that have cooperated with me are only a fraction of homes with problems. I've actually received initial inquiries from at least twice that number. But the resentment is so deep that many people are simply unwilling to cooperate or will even lash out at *anyone* who brings up the issue. Frankly, by this point most people in Des Moines believe that it's just ridiculous to even *think* that they could obtain any kind of meaningful relief from any of the impacts from Sea-Tac Airport.

That said, in closing I want to tell you how much I appreciate all the hard work you've put in on airport-related issues. Unfortunately, there is a great apathy among residents, not only for the reasons I've given but also because so many of the items that are being worked on seem so far off and far away from their day to day lives. What I'm asking you to help me with is, on the contrary a very practical and personal issue that will make a real difference to the health and homes of hundreds of Des Moines residents *right now*.

So please do what you can to get this on the legislative agenda for this autumn. I look forward to your speedy and positive reply.

Best,

-JC

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 **GENERAL STUFF**

DES MOINES, PORT PACKAGES, TINA ORWALL