

**PETITION TO SAN JUAN COUNTY COUNCIL
REGARDING THE DEER HARBOR BRIDGE PROJECT**

The County is planning to replace the wooden bridge over the inlet of Deer Harbor with a multi-million dollar concrete span of TWICE the length and thickness of the current bridge, raising the roadbed 3 to 4 feet, requiring the elimination of the traditional, functional wooden bridge, disruption of traffic flow into Spring Point and other areas west of the bridge, realignment of the connecting roads, intrusions onto neighboring properties, with a dearth of analysis of potential effects on the Deer Harbor critical areas that surround the bridge, including shellfish beds and other habitat.

Why the County insists on the destruction of the bridge that is consistent with our rural character and is adequate for the needs of the residents served by the bridge, and associated dramatic changes in much of the surrounding area is still a mystery to many of us. It seems that the simple repair of the existing bridge was never considered as an option, and the useful life of the bridge was suddenly reduced for the purpose of qualifying for grant funds. The current proposal is contrary to the expressed wishes of the Deer Harbor Plan Review Committee and pushed through over the objections of many. Indeed, many residents were or continue to be unaware of the implications of the project, such as removal of roadside trees and shrubs, increased speeds of vehicles on the proposed bridge and increased dangers to pedestrians in this heavily-used area.

We believe that it should be possible to retain and repair the bridge at great savings to the County and at great benefit to the retention of our rural way of life. At the very least, the County should pause and engage the entire community, particularly the residents that actually use the bridge daily, before constructing this project.

In particular, the County should conduct organized meetings (not "open houses") at times that permit attendance by a broad range of residents, including working people and summer residents. Indeed, it seems that a referendum on the options available to us would be the most democratic approach.

The County has budgeted approximately \$2.5 million for this project alone. Of course, if the Mount Baker road project is any indication, that number will rise even further. We think it is time to stop building urban road projects in our rural county.

Please sign the petition to ask the County to stop this overdevelopment juggernaut and consider the wishes of the people who actually use the bridge.
If you have any questions, please call Michael Durland at 376-4056.

If you prefer to contact Council directly, send an e-mail to council@sanjuanco.com.

Thank you.

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We, the undersigned residents of Orcas Island, ask the County Council to declare a moratorium on the Deer Harbor bridge project until such time as the County has conducted town hall meetings at times convenient to the various residents of the area served by the bridge, as well as County taxpayers generally, to consider the full range of options, including retention and repair of the existing bridge, and the potential for harm that the current plans pose for our community's character and critical areas.

Name (printed) Signature telephone or e-mail

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