

PATTY MURRAY'S WASHINGTON VIEW

U.S. Senator Patty Murray's Weekly Report to the People of Washington May 30, 2003

This was a great week for Washington state. One week ago today, we announced a major win for Boeing employees and the U.S. Air Force. We reached our goal to build one hundred new 767 Boeing airplanes in Everett. Along with 2,500 new jobs for our region, the Boeing Air Force tankers will help the men and women at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane do their jobs safely and efficiently.

On Wednesday, we announced more good news for the state. We will soon have daily commuter rail service from Everett to Seattle. This will reduce congestion, and it shows businesses that we are serious about fixing our transportation challenges.

Late last Friday, Congress extended unemployment assistance to laid-off workers with an additional 13 weeks for hard hit states like Washington. As we work to secure our future, we cannot forget those who are struggling today.

I'm optimistic about our future. We should apply the same cooperative spirit that won us a tanker deal and new rail service to the challenges of moving our state's economy forward.

VISIT TO SPOKANE

On Tuesday, I visited Spokane to check the progress of the Monroe Street Bridge renovation. Earlier this year, I fought for \$3 million in federal funds to help rebuild the Monroe Street Bridge. This project will provide construction jobs, less congestion and increased safety. Renovating this bridge will also restore a symbol of Spokane's past to a symbol of Spokane's bright future.

I also toured the headquarters of Itron, which employs 550 people in Spokane. Itron helps save electricity by letting businesses and residences know how much energy they are using, and how they can rearrange their usage for when there is less demand. This growing company provides good jobs in Eastern Washington and has been recognized for how well it treats its workers.

In Spokane, I was honored to receive an award from the Lands Council for my work protecting Spokane's water supply and cleaning up the Coeur d'Alene basin. Today, the Spokane Valley/Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer is the sole source of drinking water for 400,000 people. I have been working to bring federal funding back to our state to conduct a study of the Aquifer so we can know how much water is available, and how quickly it is being depleted. I am also working to clean up the Coeur d'Alene basin, which pollutes the Spokane River with lead and other heavy metals. I will continue to work to make sure this site is cleaned up because pollution in the Coeur d'Alene basin does not stop at the state border.

COMMUTER RAIL TO CONNECT SEATTLE, EVERETT

On Wednesday, I was proud to be in Everett to announce the start of new Sounder commuter rail service between Everett and Seattle later this year.

This new train service will mean less congestion on our roads, less pollution in our air, and an easier commute for thousands of residents from Everett to Seattle. This new service also tells businesses that we are serious about fixing our transportation problems and that we are making Washington state more attractive to employers.

For many years now, we've been trying to expand commuter rail service from Seattle to Everett. But the real turning point came earlier this month when I called all the interested parties together and invited them to come to Washington, D.C. I asked them to be there on May 7th and to be ready to do whatever it took to deliver the rail service that members of the Puget Sound community have been asking for. Everyone came. We met in my office in the Capitol, and we reached an agreement.

I want to applaud Sound Transit, the ports and the railroad for all of their time and commitment to making commuter rail between Everett and Seattle a reality. At a time when our state is struggling with high unemployment, a health care crisis and a stalled economy, this announcement is just one of the many things we're doing to improve our region.

TAX CUT SIGNED

This week, amid great fanfare, the President signed another tax cut that will benefit the few. Unfortunately this tax cut borrows from our children's future, while providing no immediate stimulus for our troubled economy today.

Americans are already saddled with \$6.4 trillion in national debt. That obligation will be passed on to our children and grandchildren. These tax cuts also force cuts in important national priorities like transportation, health care, education and homeland security. Reports have indicated that even our defense budget may be threatened.

Our communities need help. We need a federal commitment to transportation and infrastructure, to health care and to education. These are the types of investments that will stimulate our economy now and provide economic stability in the future.