SR 520 pontoon project: Environmental analysis released for comments

Local News

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After thorough analysis, the Washington State Department of Transportation released a key environmental report Friday that brings the department a big step closer to building pontoons that could be used for emergency replacement of the SR 520 floating bridge – or stored until needed for a new proposed bridge opening in 2014.

The report, called a draft environmental impact statement (EIS), analyzes the SR 520 Pontoon Construction Project. A public review period will last 45 days and comments will be accepted through July 12.

The proposal consists of building a casting facility and 33 concrete pontoons in Grays Harbor County at one of two sites – the Anderson & Middleton site in Hoquiam and the Aberdeen Log Yard site in Aberdeen, the preferred alternative site.

There are several ways to review the draft EIS:

View documents and comment online at the SR 520 pontoon construction website: www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/sr520/pontoons/deis

Call the project office at 206-770-3500 or 1-888-520-NEWS (6397) to request a free executive summary and CD or to purchase a printed copy of the document.

Visit local libraries in the Grays Harbor area. A full list of libraries is on the department's website.

To comment on the draft EIS:

Submit comments online.

Attend a public hearing and open house from 5 – 7 p.m. Thursday, June 24, at Aberdeen High School, 410 North G St., Aberdeen.

E-mail comments to sr520pontoons_deis@wsdot.wa.gov

Mail comments to Margaret Kucharski, WSDOT Environmental Lead, 600 Stewart St., Suite 520, Seattle, WA 98101.

The comment period is an opportunity for the public, agencies and tribes to review and comment prior to our final decision on where the project will be built. Information about our preferred pontoon construction site and the contractor we’ve selected for the project is on our website.

Local photographer’s work shows why the SR 520 bridge needs to be replaced

If you’ve reviewed our recent environmental analysis on the floating bridge project, you’ve seen the striking photograph on the cover.

This photo was taken by quick-thinking local photographer Greg Barnes, who was in a car crossing the SR 520 bridge on a stormy day back in January 2007. Greg’s photo perfectly illustrates the dangers affecting today’s floating bridge: strong waves crashing into the bridge and spraying into traffic create unsafe conditions for drivers and our maintenance crews.

We think you’ll agree that Greg’s photo captures why we are working to deliver a new SR 520 floating bridge to drivers in 2014. A big thanks to Greg for allowing us to use this photo.