

City of Westport
Attn: Tom Cappa, City Administrator
PO Box 505
Westport, WA 98595

Re: Project file 25-COW-EIS-01, public comment

As former long-time Washington State Parks and Recreation Director and Commissioners we are writing to register our support for the DEIS and to urge all local, state and federal permitting and regulatory agencies to take appropriate steps to allow the Westport Golf Links project to move forward.

As former State Parks Commissions we believe this project is consistent with the Mission and Values of Washington State Parks which are:

Mission:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission cares for Washington's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places. State parks connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide memorable recreational and educational experiences that enhance their lives.

Vision:

Washington's state parks will be cherished destinations with natural, cultural, recreational, artistic, and interpretive experiences that all Washingtonians enjoy, appreciate, and proudly support.

As former Commissioners we believe that the Westport Golf Links project presents a unique opportunity to leverage private funding to enhance access and use of Westport Lighthouse State Park including tripling of public trails and allowing active recreational use on many acres that are now overgrown with shore pine and scotch broom.

We'd also like to make note of the fact that about ten years ago the Washington State Legislature mandated that State Parks undertake an effort to create new partnerships with private and non-profit organizations to increase public use and access to underutilized state park properties and such an effort was undertaken (Recreation Concession Area or RCA). The proposed Westport Golf Links proposal is completely in keeping with legislative intent and the RCA initiative launched by Washington State Parks nearly a decade ago.

Much has already been said about the positive economic impact that the Westport Golf Links project will have on the economy in the Westport region. The importance of this can't be understated. But is also important to know that at a time when general tax support for State Parks is being reduced the financial benefit this project holds for Washington State Parks is significant. More people will visit Westport Lighthouse State Parks and nearby state parks. More Discover Passes will be sold. And more day use passes will be sold. State Parks will benefit financially at a time when their finances are greatly challenged.

Finally we are very excited about all the environment and economic benefits that will result when this project goes forward. Bringing a World-class recreational amenity to Westport that restores the natural features of the property, and repairs damage from earlier development while preserving its vital role by absorbing storm surge presents a truly transformational and responsible opportunity. The DEIS has provided a pathway to allow this project to proceed, a move which we strongly support.

Mark O. Brown

Signed by Mark O. Brown on behalf of self and:

Former State Parks Director (2010-2021/acting 2021-2022)

Don Hoch (2011 – 2021)

Former State Park Commissioners:

Mark O. Brown (2011-2023)

Cindy Whaley (2009-22)

Rodger Schmitt (2010-17)

Steve Milner (2011-2022)

Pat Lantz (2010-2020)

Cc: WSPRC members, WSPRC Director Diana Dupuis