

To: Senate Transportation Committee

From: Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, Allen Rozema, Director

Date: Monday, January 11, 2010

RE: SB 6211 – Creating an agricultural scenic corridor within the scenic and recreational highway system

Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland (SPF) is a non-profit organization in Skagit County committed to protecting farmers, farming, and farmland. Skagitonians has a membership base of over 1200 individuals, organizations and businesses located throughout Skagit Valley and Western Washington.

SPF supports SB 6211 for the following reasons:

- Allowing the creation and/or designation of *agricultural scenic corridors* within those communities and regions will provide one more significant tool in the toolbox to help protect and promote farming, an important economic base for the state. In Skagit County alone, agriculture is the No. 1 industry, with about \$300 million worth of crops, livestock, and dairy products produced each year.
- The designation of a scenic corridor allows projects and land within those corridors to be eligible for National Scenic Byway grant funding in part, to protect the “byway and the byway’s intrinsic qualities that support the byway’s designation.”
- Purchase of development rights, within designated scenic corridors, would be eligible for National Scenic Byway grant funding, helping leverage existing public and private funding opportunities.
- The designation of a scenic corridor does not have a fiscal component until such time that a corridor management plan is written. SPF would welcome the opportunity to be a partner in the creation of such a plan.

SPF offers the proposed definition of an Agricultural Scenic Corridors:

- Scenic corridors that represent Washington’s rich agriculturally historic areas and promote the maintenance and enhancement of these agricultural areas.

If you have questions or desire additional information regarding this or other farmland preservation issues facing Skagit County, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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