

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



February 11, 2016

Hand-Delivered

The Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Re: Concerns about your recent actions and communications

Dear Governor Inslee:

I write to you on behalf of my House Republican colleagues to express our concerns about your recent actions and communications following the Senate's vote to not confirm Lynn Peterson as secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

During your news conference Monday, you used the words "scurrilous," "massacre," "decapitation," and "underhanded" to portray an action that was a proper and constitutional use of legislative authority. This was also the right thing to do at the right time to ensure our WSDOT has the leadership in place to execute new reforms and a 16-year, \$16 billion transportation package.

It was disheartening to watch you malign the motives of elected officials simply because you didn't agree with their decision to exercise the right to reject a gubernatorial appointment. While it was largely led by the Republican majority, you should not overlook the fact it was a bipartisan action that had one Democratic member vote to reject the confirmation as well.

Additionally, we are disappointed to see the tone and characterization of an email (Subject: This afternoon's legislative Senate floor debate and next steps) sent by you and/or Deputy Secretary Roger Millar to all employees at WSDOT. The language used was unnecessarily political in nature and a questionable use of state resources.

The email came to our attention because not all recipients agree with your assessment of the Senate's actions and the performance of WSDOT. In fact, one person told us, "The lack of leadership (at WSDOT) has infected the entire upper staff." The constituent feedback my colleagues and I have received has echoed support of the Senate holding Secretary Peterson accountable for WSDOT's failures. These include: the ongoing I-405 Express Toll Lane controversy; the poor customer service and performance of the Good to Go system; and the various problems within Washington State Ferries. While Lynn Peterson inherited the Seattle Tunnel and SR 520 Bridge projects, which are both over budget and behind schedule, few had confidence she had the leadership skills necessary to complete

these projects to the satisfaction of Washingtonians. Please consider the possibility it was not politics that motivated the bipartisan actions of the Senate, but a real failure in leadership and accountability at a major state agency.

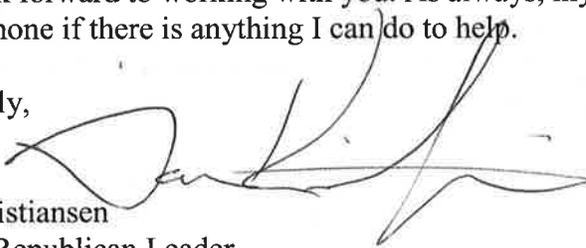
Finally, we are disappointed you have cancelled weekly meetings with the Senate Majority Coalition Caucus (SMCC). We are now at the midpoint of the legislative session – a time when we must be working together to improve our schools, grow our economy, protect our communities, and hold state government accountable. You recently said, “we need solutions, not scapegoats.” We agree, but using inflammatory rhetoric and refusing to meet with the SMCC seriously jeopardizes reaching those solutions.

Governor, we ask you to let calmer heads prevail, come back to the table and engage with Republicans. Even if you believe recent actions taken in the Senate were partisan, the appropriate response is not more partisanship. The people of our state don't want political rhetoric and bickering. We accomplish the most for everyone when we work together, not take shots across the aisle. We ask you to lead in modeling this behavior, because we have work to do. The public wants to see us solve problems, not fixate on the supposed political motivations of one another.

As we enter the last half of the legislative session, Washington citizens deserve leaders who set aside their differences and work together. To that end, we stand ready to help facilitate a more positive working relationship with you and the SMCC.

We look forward to working with you. As always, my door is open and I am available to meet in person or by phone if there is anything I can do to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Kristiansen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "K".

Dan Kristiansen
House Republican Leader
39th Legislative District