

Westport Light State Park – Westport Golf LLC Proposal Comments

July 6, 2023 – October 23, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am a Westport resident opposed to the golf course for the following reasons:

After reviewing this hydrology report: Hydrologic Report (wa.gov) it is clear that Westport's drinking water system is vulnerable to fertilizer use and salinity intrusion associated with the golf course. Figure 5-11 in the hydrology report shows that Westport's North Well Field is at risk of fertilizer intrusion.

The report explains there are 89.25 acres of fairways and greens that will require fertilizer. Every 1000 square feet of greens will receive 8 lbs of nitrogen, 4 lbs of phosphorus and 6 lbs of potassium per year. The report does not explain how much fertilizer is required by the fairways, but if we assume the same amount, that would require 86,000 lbs of fertilizer per year. That is about 100 ford f-150s truck beds filled to capacity with fertilizer every year dumped on the golf course. AECOM's study, funded by the state, has shown this fertilizer could reach Westport's North Well Field (see figure above).

The second point I want to make is the following quote from taken directly from the report, "Overall, no risk of saltwater intrusion is anticipated based on the numerical modeling results. The only potential for saltwater intrusion could be related to increased pumping of the North Well Field, if this well field is used to supply irrigation water for the golf course. However, the ultimate source of irrigation water is not known at this time; thus, no changes to the wellfield pumping rates were incorporated into AECOM's study." Since the water irrigation source could be the North Well Field, the project is again putting Westport's drinking water at risk. Also, my neighbor told me that Grayland already has saltwater intrusion because their water table is so low.

Finally, in 2014, Washington residents took an estimated 4.1 million trips to the Washington coast, with nearly 60 percent indicating their primary purpose was recreation. The top five activities respondents participated in on their last trip were beach going (60.5 percent), sightseeing or scenic enjoyment (57.1 percent), wildlife viewing (35.1 percent), photography (34.3 percent), and hiking or biking (28 percent). Here is the link to the report: [P97SurfriderWACoastalRecreationReport FINAL DELIVERED](#).

Of all the recreational uses listed, golf did not make the list for main activities, and was only listed by a portion of respondents as part of an "other" category, which was approximately 3% of respondents. A potential explanation of this could be that there aren't many golf courses on the Washington coast, however, another potential reason is participation in golf has been declining in recent years around the country as younger generations haven't had the same level of interest as previous generations. Additionally, the closure of golf courses around the country has been happening at an increased rate in recent years. Furthermore, there are already golf courses in Ocean Shores, Surfside, Ocean Park and Long Beach, which are all within 1.5 hours of the proposed Westport course. In light of this data on the most popular recreational uses and trends for the sport of golf, it seems like it might be putting the cart before the horse in moving forward with the development of a golf course for this public space.

In light of a national trend towards the privatization of our public lands, we need to remember that this property was purchased with 1.9 million publicly funded dollars via the Recreation and Conservation Office 10 years ago. The proponents of golf development could've previously purchased it with their own money. Any partnership, or potential new use for this newly acquired public land needs to ensure

that there is equitable and affordable access to all park visitors, and not creating barriers for those who are less privileged or restrictions on access and potential user conflicts. As stewards of these coastal lands, you must ensure that whatever decisions you make are in line with the public interest and the greatest benefit for a diverse set of recreational uses and users, not catering to special interests of a select few. ¹

I must respond to the comment from Kittitas Audubon Society Statement. The majority of their comment information is so far fetched and false, it must be fact checked. For example they quote that it is anticipated that 400,000 - 600,000 gallons per day of water would be used for irrigation. This could not be more false. For a links golf course in the Westport climate, irrigation wouldn't even be used or needed for 6+ months of the year. Many environmentally incorrect statements such as theirs have flooded the comment board and can't go unchecked... ²

Putting a golf course in Westport Light State Park will ruin the experience and be an environmental hazard. Because of this the public will avoid visiting that area and total visits will decrease. Golf balls will hit trail walkers. Fertilizers will be used year around Polluting the wetlands, ground water wells and Grays Harbor. We must stop this disaster from happening!³

I love seeing this project come through
Westport need this revenue
Westport alone is beautiful but a lot of business are struggling let alone not enough jobs to stay here in Westport.
Need more business
More visitors for this economy/city to grow
Thank you ⁴

I am opposed to the golf course development for several reasons:
1) Chemicals used in maintaining the golf course are toxic to life forms
2) Golfing does not need another area
3) This will disrupt the nearby real estate market making it more expensive for current residents.
4) Golfing caters to select and wealthier individuals, which should not be subsidized by the state.
5) If another golf course is needed, it should not come at the expense for other less polluting activities, relocate the proposed course to a less fragile area.⁵

PLEASE DO NOT BUILD THE PROPOSED GOLF COURSE AT THE WESTPORT LIGHT STATE PARK!!!! THE JETTY IS THE MOST CONSISTENT SURF SPOT IN WASHINGTON!!!! IF YOU BUILD A GOLF COURSE THERE AND USE FERTILIZER IT WILL DESTROY THE SURF SPOT. NOBODY WANTS TO SWIM IN FERTILIZER!!!! I PAY FOR AN ANNUAL PASS EVERY YEAR TO PARK IN THAT PARKING LOT TO SURF. YOU WILL BE LOSING REVENUE FROM SURFERS NOT BUYING YEARLY AND DAY PARKING PASSES.
Thanks.⁶

I am opposed to bringing a golf course to Westport. The negative impacts far out weigh any good. WA state is known for conserving its natural resources, let's stick to our strengths and natural beauty. No one needs or wants a golf course and they type of people it will attract. ⁷

The Westport community, which I love so dearly, desperately needs this project and will absolutely flourish with it. I'm not sure if many fully realize the economic impact that will be brought to the region,

drastically improving the lives us locals who live here. Please approve (and EXPEDITE!!) this project for the community ⁸

I would like to update my comments from the past. As time rolls by it has become even more clear that our community is in need of the Westport Light Golf Course project. The economy for our small coastal community is unstable and the increased revenue this project would bring to area businesses would make operating a business on the South Beach a more stable experience.

As you know the 600 acres as it sits now has little access and marginal economic benefit to the community. In addition, it is densely vegetated with non native, flammable plants such as scotch broom, gorse and shore pines. As our climate dries these plants become more and more of a fire hazard and as was experienced in Maui earlier this year, without considerable preparation the acreage presents a massive fire threat to the town of Westport.

The proposed golf course would not only eliminate considerable amounts of the invasive plants, it would also create fire breaks as well as develop water and vehicle access deep into the property so that if a fire were to break out there would be access and water. This is a "built environment" with very little of the land being original or natural. Our community should have the benefit of allowing a recreational experience to be placed there which will benefit the South Beach in numerous ways from employment to tax base and include revenue generation for many of our owner operated businesses. Thank you for considering these points and for moving this project forward at the earliest possible opportunity. The community is in dire need and this proposal is a Win Win Win for all. ⁹

We lov Westport and it has so much potential to be a more stable economy for the locals with the potential of this golf course. The infusion of tourist interest in Westport with the golf course will invariably attract more interest in Westport and dollars can be rolled into this phenomenal local economy. Would love to see this proposal go through for the hard working people of Westport to reap the benefits. ¹⁰

I currently own a home in westport that my family and friends use as a vacation home. We chose to invest in Westport because of the proposed golf course. As nature lovers and golf enthusiasts we passionately support a successful completion of Westport Golf Links. This will have a positive impact on the environment, a positive impact on local businesses and optimize the access to a state park. This should be considered a win for all parties and I can't wait for this project to be completed. Thanks for championing this project. ¹¹

ENTIRE CITY OF WESTPORT WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE PROPOSED GOLF COURSE ON WESTPORT LIGHT PROPERTY. CURRENTY, THIS PROPERTY HAS NO ECONOMIC OR ENVIRONMENTAL USE. THE GOLF COURSE WOULD BRING NEEDED JOBS AND CREATE PARK-LIKE ATMOSPHERE ATTRIBUTED TO ANY GOLF COURSE WTH NATURAL SAND, TREES & WATER. THE MAIN EXPENSE TO ANY GOLF COURSE IS SAND AND WATER. OBVIOUSLY, THIS PROPERTY ABOUNDS WITH BOTH. ¹²

We fully support the Westport Light Project converting the land to a golf course. It would benefit the region in so many ways. It

would boost the economy of the town. It would provide recreation for residents and visitors. It would remove many invasive species of plants, preserve the land for future use, and add road access and water to the land to create a fire break, protecting the entire peninsula.¹³

I would like to enter my support for the Westport Light Golf Course proposal. I believe the proposed development is in the best interests of all concerned parties.

Economically, the creation of this golf course will stimulate the area, both during the construction phase and also during the operational phase. Jobs will be created, the tax base expanded, tourism increased, business volume increased, and new businesses created. This is something that the South Beach area in general and Westport in particular has needed for years.

Environmentally, the land is densely vegetated with non-native, flammable plants such as scotch broom, gorse and shore pines. It presents the potential of catastrophic fire risk if climatic change dries out this vegetation. There is currently, limited access to the acreage that will be used for this project and it is of no practical use to anyone in the community. The Golf Course project will change this for the better.

In summation, I believe that the economic benefits of this project are enormous and will be of greatly improve the economy of the entire area. The addition of a golf course to the Westport Lighthouse State Park will create a destination attraction that will favorably affect all aspects of the Westport/South Beach area.¹⁴

The primary reason I am support this project is due to the economic benefits both initial and ongoing. I think the course could be a tremendous boon to the community. Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal.¹⁵

I am in support for the golf course. Putting the 600 acres into productive use will help the area economy, provide job, and increase tax revenue for the surrounding area. It will also provide opportunities for cooperation with the school and expose students to carrier paths not present in our other industry¹⁶

To Washington State Parks;

I have lived in Westport now for over 18 years, and have watched our city struggle thru the years...watching potential developers arrive, and only turn around and go away, as Westport has only shown minimal support on growth or enthusiasm to create a self supporting, and vibrant costal destination.

Westport is and has been in need of utilizing the God given location to become a vibrant and self supporting costal community Therefore, I am, as is my entire family and friends, in favor of this Westport Light House Golf course project. It has so many benefits to our city that is badly needed; like tourism, support to our local business, jobs, housing, funds to upgrade our roads, infrastructure, bolster our local economy, and the use of land that till now, has hardly been used or utilized.

I'm sure there are many other benefits that this development will help our community, and the surrounding communities as well. We have been in a depressed economy for so long, while other costal communities have, since the 1974 Boldt decision, turn from just fishing town's, to costal destination's, we too can now evolve from just a fishing town, to a destination where all of the residents of Washington can come and enjoy the beach, and have other amenities that they could enjoy here in Westport.

Thank you¹⁷

Good afternoon,

I am a resident of Grays Harbor County Washington and an independent contractor that works all areas within the county limits. I would like to express my great support or the Westport Links Golf Course. Although I do not live directly in Westport I do see the benefit that this proposed golf course, it's commerce that it will bring to the businesses, community and overall well being that will be of benefit to the township in the form of tax revenue, job growth and more money and opportunities for the schools and youth as a whole.

As a 25+ year supporter of WA State Parks and Land, I also see the benefit of having a long term private steward of the now

almost 100 acres of loosely unmanaged land. This is a precious area that is currently overgrown and unused, that should otherwise be benefitting from recreational access, forest management & use by the public. I feel that a golf course that works with the natural aspects of the existing landscape will bring more vacationers and the local public community together resulting in a win-win for all involved.

I certainly hope that my feedback will be taken with great consideration for this wonderful opportunity to be had by all.

Thank you,¹⁸

I have been a resident and local business owner since 1993. I have seen first hand what the lack of commerce can do to a community. There is a lack of activities for youth and adults alike.

A golf course would provide more opportunities for recreation for all as golf can be a family sport. Also, the added opportunities for commerce would be a big plus. As it stands right now the land is not being used for anything productive and it is land that is accreted from dredging in both the Grays Harbor / Chehalis River system, and the Columbia River, in fact most of the land didn't exist 70 years ago. Right now the vegetation that covers it is invasive weeds such as scotch broom and scrub pine. It is also a fire hazard, as it sits now there is no access into the property so it would be very difficult to fight a fire. I also understand that the effluent from the waste treatment plant could be used and that

would be a plus in that city water would not bear a burden and the water would no longer have to be pumped into half moon bay.

I love the game of golf, not that I am a scratch golfer or anything close, but just being able to get out and enjoy the natural beauty of a links style course would be fantastic. Please approve this project for the betterment of our community¹⁹

I strongly support the golf project in Westport. The area has been depressed for years and has little to look forward in the future. Growing up in Aberdeen, we never went to that state park. It was cold, windy and lonely. Westport died when fishing died. This project is wonderful with a piece of property perfect for golf. Golfers will visit from far and wide to play a course that is proposed. (even in the rain and wind). Our family has a cabin in Grayland and we are "STOKED" about the chance to spend more time "at the beach" We have about 35 family members who are all in this adventure. We want restaurants, motels, grocery stores, gas stations and tourist attractions to all thrive. The whole state would benefit. I see no downside to this project and have not heard from anyone who expressed a negative opinion. If they build it, they will come²⁰

We purchased property in Grayland 15 years ago, in part because we believed that the golf course would be constructed shortly. Our primary draw however, was the surfing and natural beauty of the area. We do not regret the decision.

From an economic standpoint there is an urgent need for businesses and amenities that will attract affluent and younger people to the region regularly. The business community believes that a golf

course is the highest and best use of this community property. Though I have not researched the economic impact of golf courses to remote towns, I want to believe that the business community is correct so that this project moves forward to bring economic vitality back to this part of the world.

I am not a golfer. I suspect that locals would not utilize the course due to the sport being costly and requiring experience and/or training. I would wish that locals are able to obtain season golf passes at much discounted rates so that they could enjoy this specialized use of this community property.

I am supportive of a small, tasteful golf course being constructed, with the bulk of the pristine land being used for other activities that are less expensive to create and maintain and that tread more lightly on the environment. Two ideas are a mountain biking course and disc golf. These other uses would enhance the odds that residents, particularly young residents, in the area will regularly utilize this wonderful real estate.²¹

I would like to voice my strong support for the Westport Light State Park Golf Links. As a current city of Westport homeowner since 2010 and prior having family-owned property in North Cove since the early 1970's, I have enjoyed the many spoils of this amazing seaside environment. I believe if done correctly in a low-impact manner, the proposed golf course would enhance previously degraded areas, help to preserve, and possibly expand existing species of native plants and provide a much-needed economic boost to Westport and the surrounding communities.

My only request would be assure there is clear understanding and consideration of "local" socio-economic factors and make allowances that provide affordable access to the golf course for the local residents.²²

I would like to express my full support for the golf course project in Westport Light State Park. I am a homeowner in Grayland and consider the project to be of unique and certain benefit to the local area. Westport has a rich history, mostly around the fishing and logging industries. While the golf course project will not recapture the vibrant economy of 50 years ago, it would be a significant boon to the area, directly offering jobs in development and operations, and act as a magnet for other businesses and a support for others already here and struggling to be successful.

I personally enjoy golf, and the managed landscaping oriented towards native species would actually improve the local ecology. Not native species have become a significant blight and the park area slated for the golf course project could eradicate a concentration of that blight. The wider area is also home to two other large State Parks for campers, birders and beachcombers to enjoy. The Westport Light Park has become a dangerous area for fire hazard and offers little access to the public. The community will benefit from the new trails and recreational areas planned, as will indigenous wildlife and plant species.

I have discussed the plusses and minuses of this development with a number of others who live in the area and vacation here. The only real opposition I have heard is based on nostalgia, and while I sometimes long for days gone by, it is clear that this development will do more to rebuild a community that recalls the past than leaving this parkland choked with flammable non-native species. Nothing about the land represents the original native environment. Also, it is difficult to see how the beach adjacent to the property would suffer, with easy public access both north and south of the Project area.

Thank you for considering my perspective.²³

We wish to express support of the development of the low impact golf course and lodging proposed by Westport Golf LLC in collaboration with the Washington State Parks at the Westport Light State Park.

Westport Winery is a family-owned venture that has been in operation since 2008 and has been named one of the top twenty most admired wineries in North America. We opened the awardwinning Sea Glass Grill in 2012. We are launching Ocean's Daughter Distillery on our property this fall. We will be constructed the International Mermaid Museum in 2020. Westport Winery Garden Resort was named the Washington

Winery of the Year in 2022. We have a great history of success in the community.

We are one of a few tourist businesses on the South Beach that are open daily, year around. This experience provides us the unique perspective of listening to visitors about what they hope to find in their trips to the area along with regular communication with our neighbors in their vision for the future. We are fully committed to providing both jobs and services to our community and view this project as a positive move for others to join our proven track record of success.

Over the years we have met with numerous groups and individuals who say they want to do what we do, but only in the summer. This is not a sustainable business model, nor is it beneficial in creating a vibrant and stable local economy. The key to our success, in addition to great products and service, is availability. We see this as a viable proposal and one that has the potential to add significant impetus to local economic success because it does not rely solely upon summer activity.

citizens and visitors to Grays Harbor County and the City of Westport would benefit from this proposal. Westport, already a beach destination, is the best site to offer this type of public private partnership. We believe this project would provide year around living wage jobs, important recreational access to public lands, and an environmentally respectful recreational experience to a variety of users.

Currently, the property is a blight, with extensive invasive weeds, a high fire hazard, an absence of accessibility, and a reputation of unsafe and unsanitary transient camping. All of these problems could be addressed with the approval of this project and creation of a links golf course. As long-time residents of Lahaina, Maui, we understand better than most the potential and likely threat of wildfire in an isolated community. Everything we once owned in Hawaii is gone. A project like the golf course would result in greater access, fire fuel reduction, and increased response ability by local firefighters in this area.

There is already an abundance of wildlife on the property and within Westport city limits. It is unlikely that the development of this property would negatively impact those populations that have already found adaptations to the suburban interface. It would however create opportunity for better management and viewing for all ages and levels of mobility.

The proposal includes development of lodging. While there are a variety of excellent places for visitors to stay in Westport, there are few oceanfront options that are so often requested by our guests even though we offer lodging on our property already. We have excellent relationships with those in the lodging business and appreciate all their positive efforts in providing places for our visitors to stay, however, there is more demand than supply in this market segment.

Westport is the primary commercial and recreational fishing port on the Washington coast. This community relies upon the sustainable harvest and marketing of natural resources. Any effort to bring more people to our harbor to see the value of this industry, the rich cultural significance of our lifestyle, and a glimpse of the hard work needed to provide food for the world is a significant side benefit of this project.

This development of the Westport Light State Park could indeed be the long-awaited tipping point for our community. While we don't know them, we welcome these investors. We encourage State Parks to embrace this partnership for the benefit of the

land, the local citizenry, and visitors to the state. We look forward to the enhanced lifestyle and recreational opportunities this will bring to our very special beachfront community.²⁴

The golf course project is a great idea in many respects. It will help to clean up the area, add new businesses and add revenue and new tax base for a community that has struggled for years. In addition, by removing non native vegetation, it will cut down on fire danger and the cost to put out those fires.

From an environmental and economic standpoint, I cannot think of many projects that this state has done in recent memory that do both. Win, win for everyone !!²⁵

My husband and I are building a home in Westport for retirement and one of the reasons is because of the planned Westport Golf Links. Westport is a wonderful town, but it desperately needs an influx of economic benefits. The golf course will add that - there will be growth in jobs for the community (construction, maintenance, operations), will add stability to the local businesses and will bring in much needed revenue to the town from course play & lodging. The golf course will also bring in lease income to the State Parks Department since currently there is no economic benefit from those 600 acres.

The golf course will also add environmental benefits. The acreage is currently overgrown with non-native, invasive species like Scotch broom and shore pines. The golf course will remove these and will add a fire break. The designers have plans for the acreage that also involves vehicle access and trails for the entire community to use.

Westport should have the benefit of allowing a recreational experience in this state park that will help the community in numerous ways from employment to tax base and include revenue generation for many of our owner operated businesses.

Please move this project forward - it can only benefit the community²⁶

To Who it May Concern,

I wish to offer my full support to the Westport Light Planning Project including the construction of a golf course on a portion of the Park property. Having worked on the coast as a private environmental consultant for over 34 years, I have seen all levels of good and bad development projects. In my opinion, development of the Westport Light Project has many more positives than negatives. The project is well designed to offer economic benefits while protecting regional habitat and species found along the Coast of Washington. In my professional opinion, this project can be constructed and operated with very limited long-term impact on the environment if the mitigation measures identified are implemented and maintained. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this project and I hope to see this project approved and constructed in the very near future.²⁷

The proposed golf course at Westport would be a dream come true for our community. I have been a visitor to the south beach for all 66 years of my life. Our large family has enjoyed a short drive to the beach from Hoquiam for many generations. We have all witnessed the glory days of Westport to the current and sad state of Westport.

The financial impact to Westport would be a fantastic.

I recently purchased property to build a home dependent on the building of the golf course. I do not plan to build if the course is not built. My hope to vounteer hundreds of hours during the golf season promoting seasoned and new golfers instruction, competition and love of the game and of the Harbor.

Additionally, I am an active director for the Evans Foundation out of Chicago. We raise funds in order to provide full-ride college scholarships to low-income students after caddying for two years.

Over 1,100 students are attending major colleges around the U.S. After the graduate from college debt free, they provide 85% of the income raised by the Foundation annually. I would be honored to help get at least four Westport area students full rides to the UW.

Lastly, I have been a personal friend of many of the investors promoting the project. They have spent years trying to get this project off the ground. They have sacrificed time, talent and money for the good of the game. An improvement to the community is greatly needed sooner than later.²⁸

I'm writing to comment on the Westport Light Golf Course project. I own a condo in Westport By The Sea since 2012. The City of Westport needs this golf course and planned walking areas to bring tourism to Westport all year long. The small businesses struggle every winter with the lack of tourism dollars that generally come from the charter boats and surfing. Having more options may be beneficial.

The forest that runs along side of the acres being considered for the golf course, should be a safe place for families and folks to get out and walk through nature. As it is now, it seems to only provide protection to the drug dealers and criminals that lurk in the area.

I hope that the State recognizes that this project would be a great asset to the community of Westport for years to come.

Thank you for your time.²⁹

Hi there, I'm writing to express my support for the proposed Golf Course in Westport. The golf course is to be placed in an area that is overgrown with dangerous fire-prone non-native invasive plants. Removing that hazard while at the same time creating recreation, jobs and tourism would be the ideal scenario!

Westport is such a special place and having this golf course will be such a blessing to the community. With the influx in visitors, small businesses will thrive, more money pours in, infrastructure can be bettered and all in all the economy there becomes more stable. We love the community so much and see how it is growing for the better. The golf course would be a perfect addition and solution to the threat of brush fire in that area (which seems to be more and more of a threat these days..). We are excited to see the growth and experience the golf course for ourselves! Thank you for your time.³⁰

Our community is in need of the Westport Light Golf Course project. The economy for our small coastal community is unstable and the increased revenue this project would bring to area businesses would make operating a business on the South Beach a more stable experience.

As you know the 600 acres as it sits now has little access and marginal economic benefit to the community. In addition, it is densely vegetated with non native, flammable plants such as scotch broom, gorse and shore pines. As our climate dries these plants become more and more of a fire hazard and without considerable preparation the acreage presents a massive fire threat to the town of I would like to update my comments from the past. As time rolls by it has become even more clear that our

community is in need of the Westport Light Golf Course project.

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marginal economic benefit to the community. In addition, it is densely vegetated with non native, flammable plants such as scotch broom, gorse and shore pines. As our climate dries these plants become more and more of a fire hazard and as was experienced in Maui earlier this year, without considerable preparation the acreage presents a massive fire threat to the town of Westport.

The proposed golf course would not only eliminate considerable amounts of the invasive plants, it would also create fire breaks as well as develop water and vehicle access deep into the property so that if a fire were to break out there would be access and water. This is a "built environment" with very little of the land being original or natural. Our community should have the benefit of allowing a recreational experience to be placed there which will benefit the South Beach in numerous ways from employment to tax base and include revenue generation for many of our owner operated businesses.

Thank you for considering these points and for moving this project forward at the earliest possible opportunity.³¹

I am writing in full support of the Westport Light Planning Project. My son and I own a "summer home" idenyified above in Westport. Our family has enjoyed the Westport experience for over 50 years. . Unfortunately, with the decline in sport fishing, so has the town declined. Many of the available activities which we enjoyed are no longer available or only available during the summer months. Without the sports fishing revenue, Westport has lost many of it's businesses as readily seen with boarded up windows and deteriorating buildings. It is a shame that such a wonderful town is underutilized and not fully available to more people to enjoy as it once was. I see the Westport Light Project as an opportunity to once again make Westport a wonderful experience, with the return of the many activities we onced enjoyed year around.³²

Parks and Recreation Commission:

Our family has purchased a residential property in Westport and I write in support of the Westport Light Golf LLC golf course project. With over fifty years of playing golf, here's a few special travel golf visits; Pebble Beach, Torrey Pines, Kiawah Island, Pinehurst No. 2, Whistling Straits, Harbour Town. Casa de Campo, Portmarnock, Lahinch, Waterville, Ballybunion, Royal County Down, Doonbeg, St. Andrews, Carnoustie, Kingsbarns.

Everyone of these are important community enterprises attracting enthusiastic visitors, supporting local participation and providing rippling economic impacts.

During my near sixty year career living in numerous states I enjoyed many evenings and weekends on over fifty different golf courses. Having grown up in Wisconsin I know the Milwaukee County Park system has fifteen public parks that include golf courses (<https://mke.golf/>). A favorite Wisconsin resort destination, Door County

(<https://www.doorcounty.com/experience/golf>), has eight public golf courses with Peninsula State Park Golf Course (<https://www.peninsulagolf.org/>) just celebrating its centennial season. Every course I have ever enjoyed supports conservation with ever continuing environmental improvement as and essential aspect of planning.

The Westport community will greatly benefit from adding a quality golf experience. Significant lease revenue to State Parks will help fund other area properties and activities. Initially the faculties construction will produce valuable local contracts and jobs. When

<p>operational the facilities will require continuous supply and service contracts as well as direct employment jobs. By attracting local and visiting golfers there will be a ripple through many Westport community businesses. Having experienced golf travel I know desirable golf destinations brings overnight guests which adds shopping, dining, lodging and participation in other community activities.</p> <p>Our family, including my grandchildren, look forward to enjoying golf at Westport Light Golf Links. I am always available to clarify or expand on my thoughts and experiences.</p> <p>Thank you.³³</p>
<p>As a business that has been in Westport Wa since 1975, and a neighboring property owner. Englund Marine & Ind Supply Co supports the Westport Light Golf Course Project. The economic benefits to our community and business is needed.</p> <p>Respectfully Submitted,³⁴</p>
<p>Westport state park does NOT deserve commercial development. This is a beautiful haven for water sports and dune walkers. We should reduce the impact on the land by preventing commercialization and the use of fertilizers which would be used to maintain the greens.³⁵</p>
<p>I am commenting in strong support of the Westport Light Golf Course project. The existing park can be significantly improved with a golf course, which will protect the environment, remove invasive species, continue to provide habitat for animals, and help the local economy in Westport by bolstering tourism and diversifying beyond fishing and services.</p> <p>I am unaffiliated with the project, but I see benefits far outweighing any downsides. I understand there are others in the community that may be opposed to this, picturing nothing but grass and removing all the native plants - that is not what this project will do from everything I've seen and read. Animals will continue to thrive there and it will be a much nicer environment for the humans than a bunch of brush and swamp that exists today.</p> <p>Thank you for listening and helping the project move ahead to benefit Westport, the surrounding community, and the state itself.³⁶</p>
<p>I have read most of the material available to the public on this project and wish to add my support for its approval. A golf venue of this quality and at this location would be a significant asset to the community and the State. Please do the right thing and continue to move this project toward a reality.</p> <p>Thank you³⁷</p>
<p>Please approve this project. This project makes the best use of the land as it is now and provides a good steward of the land for many years to come. this is the most inclusive and inviting option for the land that offers a feasible return to State Parks and the State government for the use of the land. It will also provide needed income for the city of Westport.</p> <p>The golf course will provide many direct and indirect jobs / careers for the community of Westport. This is a very positive addition to the community³⁸</p>
<p>We've retired here and love the South Beach living. And we're especially impressed with the potential of the Westport Light State Park. It's right in the middle of the town but not accessible and full of non native invasive trees and plants.</p> <p>The plan you're considering has some wonderful strengths...paths throughout the park...a beautiful natural</p>

landscaped golf course. And the golf course would pay the park expenses...what a deal.

We join almost everyone here in encouraging the Parks Dept to implement this plan asap.

Thank you, I highly support this project. I frequently walk the paved path next to the ocean. The dense overgrowth on the inside of this walkway is overgrown with weeds and scotch broom. Although there are a few paths running inward to this area, the weeds brush present dangers to anyone walking down a non-paved path. It looks terrible. this project would clean up most parts and would also attract other visitors. Some businesses in anticipation of this project have remodeled and a few more eating restaurants are planned. when I have friends and family visiting, the food choices are slim. More shopping choices for not only food but also having a hardware supply store would benefit those of us who live here and often have to drive to Aberdeen for these items. ⁴⁰

I have been doing business in the NW for more than 30 years. I also have played golf at Bandon Dunes about 20 times over that period of time. The idea that Westport would have such a facility would help the local economy tremendously. It would transform the community giving it another reason for people to go to Westport beside fishing. We are either growing or dying, we are never standing still. Westport, like all of us, needs to evolve. The golf course with all of the amenities it would bring allows the community to grow. It was unfortunate that this did not occur 15 years ago when it was first proposed, the community should not let this happen again.

Kind regard ⁴¹

Commissioners,

As an adjacent property owner and full time Westport resident , I am in favor of proposed links style golf course. It has been 5 years since the idea was first put forward. It is time this project got started. Westport Light State Park is an underutilized, overgrown, breeding ground for invasive plant species. The project as proposed would make significant changes to the amount of overgrowth and help to eradicate the fire risk posed by scotch broom and downed shore pine. Plans that I have seen appear to also prioritize, protecting wetlands and increasing access to the park for those of us with handicaps. These are all good things for the City of Westport. My family uses this park every day and we are fully in support of the golf links project. ⁴²

I want to express my support for the proposed Scottish Links Golf Course. I have reviewed their detailed plans and find them very environmentally friendly and their site plans will do a lot to improve the accessibility of this area to everyone. A previous golf course was in the process of construction back in 2006-2009. It was nearly completed before the 2009 recession hit and the developer lost his backing. Unfortunately, in the last 15 years, the area has become overgrown with non-indigenous scotch broom, gorse and shore pines creating a huge fire risk for the Westport community. There is currently almost no access to this 600 acres of State Park. Westport Golf LLC, working in conjunction with State Parks and other agencies, has created a very thoughtful design that will become a great asset to us in both the near and long term. It will provide added employment and economic benefits and help with increasing our off-season tourism. Of all the things that could have been proposed for this area, this golf course is, by far, the best course of action. ⁴³

Hello,

I wanted to take a moment and express my 100% support in the suggested golf course in our town. I spoke to many of my neighbors and it is with one voice that we support and looking forward to see this project unfold. It will be without a doubt a

huge help to our economy and will elevate the State of Washington to a higher level. I have been keeping a very close eye on any developments and I am certainly very excited for what the future brings with this golf course.

Please make it happen, we really want to see it in Westport.

Regards, ⁴⁴

10/18/23

Dear Washington State Parks Commissioners,

I'm a life-long resident of Grays Harbor, growing up on a cranberry bog between Hoquiam and Ocean Shores, and working as an investment advisor in Aberdeen for 41 years. For full disclosure, I am an avid golfer and a small investor in Westport Golf Links, LLC.

In the 1960's and early 1970's Grays Harbor was a booming economy, with logging, wood products, fishing, and tourism as the leading industries. The economy abruptly changed in the late 70's and early 80's. The Boldt decision took a thriving fishing business and "guttled" it permanently. Westport's economy became a sad comparison to its pre-Boldt status. In logging and wood products the spotted owl ruling "undercut" a thriving industry. The logging industry here has never been the same. Generally, the tourism business has continued to do well, except in Westport which relied so much on fishing.

For years, anytime there was a news report on events in the area, we've been referred to by the media as "economically depressed Grays Harbor". Quite often the government has handed out grants for projects here that have been welcome "band-aids", but nothing that changed economic conditions here.

The Washington State Parks Commission now has the opportunity to bring the first new industry to Grays Harbor (other than the Stafford Creek Prison) in many years. The location of the Westport Golf Links in Westport is especially appropriate considering the problems that its fishing business has experienced.

Westport, and all of Grays Harbor, desperately needs the influx of golfers and vacationers that the course will create. The "multiplier effect" will lift up businesses including lodging, restaurants, gift shops and even the fishing business. These opportunities don't come along very often.

Let's not ignore ecological considerations. Using the Westport treated wastewater on the golf course rather than pumping it into the ocean is a major improvement. Low wetland areas will be avoided in golf course construction and use. I've heard that there is a plan to reintroduce endangered plant species on unused land. Another factor is that the "native" dunes areas to be used, are not necessarily "native". The Westport Museum has some very old pictures showing no vegetation at all on the land west of the lighthouse. The photos show sand only, no grass, bushes, or pine trees. I hope the commissioners get a chance to view these photos to see what the "native" beach was like back then.

In summary, I appreciate the time you spend as commissioners and hope you see fit to make a decision that will help so many Grays Harbor and Westport residents. ⁴⁵

Greetings,

I attended via Zoom the October 18, 2023 Parks Commissioners study session in which a review of the Westport Light Golf Links was presented by proponents. I would like to address some of the statements made at that study session.

Proponents claimed that the development of the golf links would be environmentally beneficial to the park. They relied on the fact that shore pines and scotch broom would be controlled. This simplistic attachment to two species of plants does not represent an environmental gain. What about the use of fertilizer and pesticides? What about the potential for salt water intrusion from the high use of water in dry months? Evaluating critical areas is a complex endeavor as evidenced by the numerous environmental reports produced by Parks for this development.

Once again, proponents make statements that are based on opinions with narrow viewpoints. They are entitled to have their own perspective, but it doesn't make their statements worthy of consideration other than as those of developers trying to make a deal, in my view.

Grays Harbor County takes environmental protection of sensitive habitats seriously. I would reference Title 18 Environment, Chapter 18.06 Critical Areas Protection Ordinance:

<http://graysharborcowa>.

elaws.us/code/coor_title18_ch18.06_sec18.06.010

Also of note during the presentation was that proponents indicated that only 20+ acres of wetlands would be disturbed, but that those could be created on site and elsewhere. What about the wetland buffers of 110 feet?

I am aware of the wetland buffer issue when developing property. My own home in Grayland, a 7000 square foot lot, required a Reasonable Use Exemption because my lot was within 110 feet buffer of a wetland. To be clear, I was not displacing any wetland, I was within 110 feet of the wetland.

Yet proponents did not discuss wetland buffers at all. Have those aspects disappeared for the developer?

I was required to gift 1100 square feet of my lot to Grays Harbor County as a Conservation Easement in perpetuity. I can't use that land going forward. I was not offered off-site mitigation.

And yet, proponents of the golf course seem to feel they can develop wetlands on and off-site for mitigation, including another state park, to offset use of the wetlands and buffer areas. I will take exception to this if the golf course is approved and will be contacting the County to find out how to complain about separate treatment regarding critical areas. The proponents mentioned the potential for "reintroducing Snowy Plover habitat" which is not at all based on the habitat needs of these birds.

I am glad a Parks staff member was there to provide some factual comments to contradict some of the statements made by proponents. The dune trail may have returned to its original position in the updated plan, where it is located now, but it still weaves among and next to golf links. They displayed a photo of a section of the trail at Chambers Bay Golf Links in University Place as a comparison and indicated that there had been no golf strikes of pedestrians to date. While this may be true, I can't verify it, it doesn't mean the potential for golf ball strikes isn't possible.

My parents owned a home on a golf course for a short period of time. When I visited for a weekend, golf balls routinely hit the roof of their home. We didn't sit in the back yard at all for fear of strikes.

Golf ball strikes, or the fear of them, is going to alter use of the dune trail and perhaps the beach as well. Will people simply feel they must stop using Westport Light State Park?

I'm not an expert, but all you have to do is a Google search for "golf ball strikes pedestrians" and many items come up for review. This article, "Club may be liable if stray golf balls hit walkers on new trail, city warns" from 2021, talks about the problem. Solutions were to erect high nets and require golfers to only use certain types of clubs. Here's the link to the article: <https://clubandresortbusiness.com/club-may-beliable-if-stray-golf-balls-hit-walkers-on-new-trail-city-warns/>

Some of the most common injuries associated with golf ball strikes are traumatic brain injury, skull and facial fractures.

Another article "Golf balls are flying in Scottsdale, and green belt users are concerned about injuries, safety" 2019. The article describes how a walker interviewed said "He is constantly aware when golfers are on the tee." He speeds up to get down the path faster, but was still hit by an errant ball.

The article describes how this is a high use trail. They concluded that "It appears that the risk of injury for any one user is not great," the report read. "However, the risk does exist."

Another runner on the path interviewed said "Every time I run that path I think, 'Is somebody going to hit me with a golf ball?'"

Scottsdale erected signage to indicate areas of stray golf balls.

The article goes on to say that, generally speaking, there is going to be a risk of errant golf shots around any golf course and that signage is

insufficient remediation.

A link to the article:

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/scottsdale/2019/04/20/foreflying-golf-balls-along-scottsdale-greenbelt-causinginjuries/3295438002/>

Will legal liability lie with the proponents who build and operate the course, or Washington State Parks? Parks will certainly be forced to erect signs in the park, parking lots, beach and dune trail, warning pedestrians of the danger of ball strikes. What will be the result? Maybe there will never be a ball strike. Maybe pedestrians will learn to be vigilant and “keep an eye out” for stray balls.

An example of a sign to erect might be: “Pedestrians watch for golf balls which can cause injury.” or “Pedestrians walk at your own risk.” I mean seriously, how is this a park experience that is good for anyone? The proponents presentation still included the consultant review of regional fiscal benefits. Has this been confirmed? They indicated local jobs would be plentiful in the pro shop, maintenance of the course and hotel. In my view, maintenance leadership roles will be highly specialized and those employees will move to the area, not be hired from the area. Hospitality work will be available in restaurant and hotel housekeeping. But this is hard work with notoriously low wages and no benefits. Construction jobs will come and then go with no guarantee that they will be locally sourced.

They, and the outgoing Commissioner, discussed in some detail how Grays Harbor County has a higher unemployment rate than the average in the State. They indicated that this is a chronic condition that is the result of many factors including The Great Recession of 2008. While everyone suffered during the Great Recession and many other fiscal events, there is nothing unusual about higher unemployment rates in rural counties. Rural counties as a group have consistently higher unemployment rates than urban counties. In March, 2015, Grays Harbor unemployment rate was 9.4%, Kittitas County was 6.3%, Grant County was 8%, and Ferry County still the highest with 11.7%. King County was 4% and Pierce 6.5%. Further back in July 2001, Grays Harbor County was 8.6% and King County 4.9%. See Employment Security Department Washington State Monthly employment report: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/monthlyemployment-report>

If you investigate further on the Employment Security Department of Washington State website, you will find more details. Current unemployment for Grays Harbor for August 2023 is 5.5%. Kittitas County is 5.1%. Urban counties like King and Pierce are 3.7% and 4.4% respectively. Ferry County in the northeast section of the state had 7.1%. These are exceptionally good numbers for the county, although still not as low as the urban counties. See Office of Financial Management State of Washington for 2022

<https://ofm.wa.gov/tags/county-data>.

Again, rural counties have higher unemployment than those densely populated. Yes, fiscal shocks happen and it hurts everyone, but the fact remains that the state unemployment rate averages are always lower than the specific unemployment rates for rural counties. It’s just the nature of rural vs urban.

To consistently highlight Grays Harbor County employment rates, while not comparing them to other rural counties, is selecting data without comparable comparisons. Presenting unemployment data and fiscal analysis from a narrow perspective gives the impression that the proponent evaluations and solutions are valid and reasonable, of which I strongly disagree.

What about poverty rates? If you talk about unemployment, I think

poverty should be incorporated into the discussion. Currently, Grays Harbor rates are 14.3-24.7% and Kittitas County is the same. King and Pierce are 7.3-9.7% respectively. Do you see the similarities? The poverty rates mimic the unemployment statistics. This also makes sense: rural counties have more poverty than urban counties.

I think we can agree that poverty and unemployment are serious issues. Addressing them requires a complex understanding of many aspects of life in Westport and the County. Unemployment, types of employment, infrastructure and housing are just some of the aspects to study.

What is assured, is that gentrification will happen. Housing prices will rise, as will rents. Grays Harbor County seems to hand out short term rental approvals readily. The County will have to, at some point, develop an abiding concern about housing residents who live and work here as well. Currently the County wait list for the limited low-income housing units available is closed. Applicants can't even get on the wait list. These are all serious issues that will need to be understood.

Where are those studies?

People love rural areas specifically because they are not urban. How will a championship golf course affect the region? What, exactly, will the region become? A study on comparable locations with golf courses installed would be something else to consider.

Again, Chambers Bay Golf Course was created by a lauded designer, holds championship events, and since its installation in 2008, has never made a profit. All this while being located in the south Puget Sound region with over 4 million people within an hour of the course. A study of the financial success of golf courses might be informative.

I expect, and am grateful to, Parks staff for being vigilant in the preservation of critical areas and maintaining our state lands for everyone to use. I am impressed by the reports from staff and their dedication to science and facts. We have the best parks in the country thanks to staff who do exceptional work, and in policies that keep our state parks as wild as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. ⁴⁶