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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*EDC's Ferry Service Disruptions Impacts Survey*

The EDC recently launched a survey to determine economic and social impacts to San Juan County residents, from recent Washington State Ferries service disruptions. Initial findings show that most residents responding to the survey reported negative impacts.

*Key findings from the survey:*

- Half of San Juan County residents and businesses responding to the EDC's survey reported losses of \$600 or more from summer 2021 ferry disruptions; some lost many thousands of dollars.
- 447 participants from San Juan County responded to the survey. Of those, 94% reported negative impacts from ferry disruptions, 2.2% reported positive impacts, and 3.8% reported neutral impacts.
- People reported that disruptions impacted access to critical medical appointments including chemotherapy, surgeries, and prenatal visits (318 people, 71% of respondents).
- Disruptions prevented many people from getting to and from work (137 people, 31%).
- Some respondents expressed fears about island children being left on the mainland overnight after school events.
- People reported losing opportunities to visit family, and to support and be with loved ones who were in crisis, at the end of their lives, or at memorial services.
- Tourism business owners, crushed by closures last summer, reported large losses from ferry disruptions and noted that long-term damage may have been caused to our region's reputation as a destination.
- Other businesses, such as farmers, builders, truckers, and grocers, reported large financial losses and stress on employees and clients, as well as spoilage of produce and suffering of livestock.
- San Juan County has been inequitably impacted by outages as it is the only county served by WSF without alternative road-based egress.

San Juan County government and Council members, and Washington state legislators for the 40<sup>th</sup> District are currently working with Governor Inslee's office to determine short-term mitigation initiatives to reduce impacts to residents from ferry outages. In addition, local legislators, the EDC and other entities are striving to find long-term solutions to the current ferry service crisis.

The EDC will post further information as data are further analyzed, at <https://sanjuansedc.org/ferry-survey-2021>.

*The San Juan County Economic Development Council (EDC) strives to support small rural enterprises, and conduct projects to stimulate new job creation, strengthen the economic base for working families, and support overall quality of life for islanders.*

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