



Cowlitz County

County Administration Building
207 Fourth Avenue North
Kelso, WA 98626
www.co.cowlitz.wa.us

News Release

August 12, 2009

CANCELLATION OF MOUNT ST. HELENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The Mount St. Helens Advisory Committee Meeting with Senator Patty Murray, Senator Maria Cantwell, and Congressman Brian Baird scheduled for Thursday August 13, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. at the Cowlitz County Event Center *has been cancelled.*

Contact:

Axel Swanson
Board of Cowlitz County
Commissioner
Phone: (360) 577-3020
SwansonA@co.cowlitz.wa.us

The three co-chairs of the committee (Skamania County Commissioner Paul Pearce, Lewis County Commissioner Lee Grose and Cowlitz County Commissioner Axel Swanson) in consultation, agreed with the recommendation of the City of Longview. Unfortunately, the meeting to discuss the Mount St. Helens Advisory Committee recommendations has been misrepresented on the internet as a forum to discuss the issue of health care. This committee meeting has drawn inordinate attention due to the attendance of the congressional delegation; therefore the issue of public safety has become a major concern.

The co-chairs of the committee will regretfully reschedule the meeting to a later date.

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P.O. Box 128
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August 12, 2009

Axel Swanson, Co-Chair
Mt. St. Helens Advisory Committee
Cowlitz County
207 Fourth Avenue North
Kelso, WA 98626

Re: Mt. St. Helens Advisory Committee Meeting-August 13, 2009

Dear Mr. Swanson:

The City understands that the Mt. St. Helens forum scheduled for tomorrow afternoon at the County Conference Center is now being misrepresented as a forum on the national health care issue. As a result, we have been provided information of estimates that there could be up to 900 people in attendance at the event, and because of that we are concerned about our ability to ensure adequate security for the safety of the Mt. St. Helens Advisory Committee, the public attending the meeting, and the congressional delegation. Based on these numbers, our police department estimates that we would need to have approximately 20 police officers to manage the security. This would require the City to divert ten of our police department personnel including patrol, detectives, and administration away from their normal duties and responses to our community. In addition, we would need to establish a special overtime detail for the other ten officers; we estimate this overtime cost would be in the neighborhood of \$2,600. In the event more people showed up to the event, our police department has notified the Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office and Kelso Police Departments to be on alert should we need additional support.

One other concern is the short time frame we have to put together this detail and plan for the logistics for a crowd of this size. We are cognizant of the groundswell of emotions on the health care issue, and we want to ensure a productive environment for addressing the Mt. St. Helens issue that is the topic for which the meeting is intended. Again, we want to be able to ensure an orderly, safe environment for all participants and those people that will attend the Mt. St. Helens meeting and any future meetings that may be held related to the health care issue.

As you know, the potential for this event changes every minute with the continued misinformation and misrepresentation of the topic for this meeting. The City of Longview is suggesting that the advisory committee and the congressional delegation

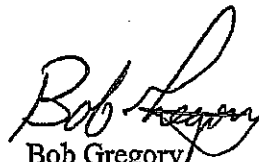
consider rescheduling this meeting so that accurate information on the meeting topic can be distributed, and that we have more time to adequately plan for security.

We will also be contacting the congressional delegation and offering our assistance for any future meetings they may be planning regarding the national health care issue. The City of Longview is very supportive of public debate on this significant issue, and we want to make sure we can provide adequate support to the meeting participants and the congressional delegation that may be holding any future meetings in Longview.

Please advise us at your earliest convenience if you decide to reschedule the Mt. St. Helens advisory committee meeting.

Respectfully,

Kurt Anagnostou
Mayor


Bob Gregory
City Manager

cc: Honorable Senator Patty Murray
Honorable Senator Maria Cantwell
Honorable Congressman Brian Baird
Alex Perez, Longview Police Chief
Cowlitz County Commissioners Office
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