

Testimony of
Darlene Kordonowy, Mayor
City of Bainbridge Island, Washington State

for the Public Hearing on H.R. 3747,
directing the Secretary of Interior to conduct a study of the Eagledale Ferry Dock
at Taylor Avenue in the State of Washington for memorial status in
the National Park System.

Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands
1334 Longworth House Office Building
10:00 a.m., September 5, 2002

The City of Bainbridge Island strongly supports H. R. 3747, the study by the National Park Service of the Eagledale Ferry Dock for a national memorial. The City has been actively working with the WW II Nikkei Exclusion Memorial Committee to create a national memorial at the Eagledale Ferry Dock site.

The events that occurred there 60 years ago are part of the American story of the 1942 Exclusion Order that affected thousands of people. It is a story of social injustice, dealing with our fragile constitutional rights. An American story that needs to be told. And it should be told through interpretation and in context of the historical events of the time.

Sixty years ago we were a country at war, and because Bainbridge Island had two military installations and was an island easily contained, our community was selected as the first to be affected by the Exclusion Order. While most people throughout America applauded the government's action, most of the Bainbridge community was opposed. These were our neighbors and friends being excluded. None were more visibly opposed than the late Walt and Milly Woodward, publishers of the Bainbridge Review newspaper. This small newspaper was the first and only paper on the West Coast that opposed the internment and bravely urged its readers to do likewise. Throughout the war, the Woodwards continued to maintain contact with those interned, reporting events and

activities of the camp in the Island paper.

After the war and the release from the internment camps, more than half of the Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island came back home. Our community welcomed them, primarily because of the continued and vocal support of the Woodwards.

The Eagledale Ferry Dock is gone now, but the remnants of the pilings are still visible, located in Eagle Harbor, across from Winslow. The proposed memorial site is at the western end of a 55-acre Superfund site, that for more than 80 years was the home of one of the West Coast's most productive creosote wood treatment plants. Currently under clean up, the Wyckoff Superfund site is linked both geographically and historically to the old Eagledale Ferry landing.

Our community is working toward establishing both these sites, the Eagledale Ferry Dock and the Wyckoff Superfund site, as a place for education, interpretation and healing. One area as a memorial, restoring human dignity; and the other as a park, restoring nature. Both sites are linked, telling stories of our national history and recognizing mistakes of our past actions.

The story that Walt and Milly Woodward kept alive on their newspaper pages needs to be told to every generation. I am confident that a study of Eagledale Ferry landing by the National Park Service will clearly establish the importance of this little piece of Bainbridge Island, not just as the place where we first said good-bye to our neighbors, but as the beginning of the American story of the 1942 Exclusion Order.

The proposed memorial has strong support, receiving statewide endorsement, including Governor Locke, the Washington State legislature, Kitsap County Commissioners, and the Bainbridge Island City Council. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of my community in support of this National Parks study for the Eagledale Ferry Dock.