

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2009

McGinn on Tunnel: No Deal

Seattle — Michael McGinn today announced his opposition to the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement plan emerging in the Legislature.

“This deal keeps getting worse”, said McGinn. “As Mayor, I will not authorize the use of city tax dollars for the tunnel or associated cost overruns.”

The Washington State Legislature is poised to pass legislation to force all tunnel cost overruns onto Seattle taxpayers. This is in addition to the \$900 million in city revenues that Mayor Greg Nickels has already pledged to the \$4.2 billion project.

A bored tunnel of this size (54 feet in diameter) has never been built anywhere in the world. Most tunnels projects experience cost overruns, even when using conventional engineering techniques. Boston’s Big Dig had cost overruns of \$10.6 billion. A cost overrun here of that size would cost Seattle residents approximately \$35,000 per household under the new legislation.

“We are committing \$900 million we don’t have — plus who knows how much more — while our essential services are being cut, libraries are closed, schools are in trouble, and our local transit is facing 20% cuts in service.” Said McGinn

Earlier in the session Gregoire and the Legislature backed away from their commitment to provide new transit revenue. Additional transit funding was a key element of the deal touted by Nickels when he committed Seattle to the most expensive and least vetted viaduct replacement option.

Seattle Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis said the city won’t oppose the bill. “I’m not going to put a happy face on it, but I’m also not going to jeopardize the project over what I see as a fairly petty gesture, a negative gesture, towards the city of Seattle,” Ceis said earlier this week.

Responds McGinn: “This is more than a “petty gesture” on the part of the Legislature. It holds Seattle taxpayers accountable for potentially hundreds of millions, potentially even billions of dollars. The Mayor is risking the city’s financial health for decades to come.”

“It’s one thing for Nickels and the State to force a tunnel on us after Seattle voted 70% against it. It’s another to force Seattle taxpayers to pay 900 million dollars, and now all cost overruns. We have better uses for Seattle tax dollars than a tunnel that will make global warming worse, and do nothing for transit service or traffic congestion.”

“It’s time to get out of this bad deal.”

About Michael McGinn

McGinn announced his candidacy for Mayor on Tuesday. He is former local chair of the Sierra Club, as well as former president of the Greenwood Community Council. An attorney, McGinn was a partner at Stokes Lawrence before founding Seattle Great City Initiative in 2006. He lives in north Seattle with his wife Peggy and children Jack, Miyo, and Cian.

###

For more information:

Micheal McGinn 206/979-1461

Brett Horvath, 509/999-1418
Campaign spokesman

www.mcginformayor.com

<http://www.youtube.com/McGinnForMayor>