



King County

Reagan Dunn

Councilmember, District 9

Metropolitan King County Council

February 21, 2024

Chief John R. Batiste
Washington State Patrol
PO Box 42600
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Chief Batiste,

On the night of Monday, February 19, a drive by shooting that occurred on I-5 in Tukwila left a victim in critical condition—the latest in what has been a surge in gunfire incidents along highways and freeways in King County in recent months. I am writing to request additional information about these incidents and seek any opportunities to partner to combat this rise in shootings.

First of all, I want to emphasize that I am extremely grateful to the Washington State Patrol (WSP) troopers who are on the frontlines of this issue, risking their lives to keep our communities safe and investigating the cases to bring them to justice. Thank you for your continued service and vigilance. My heart and prayers go out to the trooper who was shot in the line of duty last Friday, February 16, while on a special emphasis patrol to prevent gun violence on our roadways. I wish him a full and quick recovery, and my thoughts are with him as well as his family and colleagues.

As the Councilmember representing the communities of District 9 in southeast King County, I am concerned that the majority of these freeway and highway shootings are occurring in the southern end of the county, including on Highway 164 near Enumclaw and Highway 18 in Auburn. Though news reports have presented conflicting information about the exact number of freeway and highway gunfire incidents that have occurred so far in 2024, the number seems to be over a dozen. This excessive figure is gravely alarming.

In light of this, I am requesting more information on the number and nature of these freeway and highway shootings, the status of the investigations, and what is being done in response to them. Specifically, I would like to know whether these are isolated incidents with individual perpetrators or connected incidents with repeat perpetrators. I am also interested in opportunities to collaborate efforts between law enforcement agencies and welcome any opportunity to partner with you.

As an elected official, I believe the public has a right to know all the details that WSP has to offer regarding these freeway shootings and deserves reassurance that these incidents are being taken seriously. The seemingly random nature of these violent acts sparks a particular fear that anyone—a

mother driving her kids to school or a dad commuting to work—might be next. Any additional context or information you can offer will go far to alleviate the concerns of our community.

Thank you for considering my request and your attentiveness to my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reagan Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Reagan Dunn
Vice Chairman
King County Council

Cc: King County Executive Dow Constantine
King County Sheriff Patti Cole-Tindall