

Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

Creating choices for elders and adults with disabilities in Seattle-King County

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July 13, 2016

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senator
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: ADA regulations—hearing loops

Dear Senator Murray:

On May 10, the U.S. Access Board held a town hall meeting at the University of Washington. The event, which focused on accessible building code and public transportation, was attended by hundreds of people of all ages and abilities and featured compelling testimony on the need for hearing loops in transit vehicles and public meeting venues. As the chair of the ADS Advisory Council, I am writing to support that testimony.

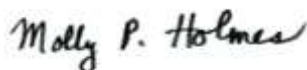
Our Advisory Council asks that you contact the U.S. Departments of Justice and Transportation, and related regulatory agencies, to request that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) be amended to **require hearing loop installation wherever a public address (PA) system is installed in any federally funded public transit vehicle, vessel, or facility**. This would include new buses, streetcars, trains, and ferries, as well as ticket offices, transportation hubs, and platforms.

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, by age 65, nearly 25 percent of U.S. residents have hearing loss. After age 75, a full 50 percent of residents have *disabling* hearing loss. Assuming that the rate of age-related hearing loss remains stable, our country faces a massive problem accommodating individuals with hearing loss in the years to come. Now is the time to address this issue.

We believe that every public facility should offer a hearing loop. Hearing loop technology, once installed, works whenever the PA system is used, and is the best alternative for most people with hearing aids and cochlear implants. For more information on hearing loop technology, please visit LoopWashington.org.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Our Advisory Council looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Molly Holmes, Chair
Seattle-King County Advisory Council on Aging & Disability Services

cc: Sue Swenson, U.S. Access Board
Karen Braitmayer, U.S. Access Board
Christopher S. Hart, U.S. Access Board

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