

# HeraldNet

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## **Paine Field a key point of contention in County Council race**

By [Jeff Switzer](#), Herald Writer

The Snohomish County Council race between two state legislators hinges on the divisive issue of jet noise.

State Sen. Jean Berkey and state Rep. Brian Sullivan, both Democrats, have staked out different ground on whether more commercial flights should be in Paine Field's future.

"I see Paine Field as a valuable resource for the jobs it's brought to our community," Berkey said.

"I think the bottom line on the issue is I would support limited commercial air traffic," so long as there are ways to reduce jet noise, she said.

Sullivan, a former Mukilteo mayor and councilman, has an emphatic "no" for commercial airline traffic at the airport.

Instead, the county's focus should remain on creating aerospace related jobs at Paine Field, he said.

"This is a blood sport issue in this county," Sullivan said. "Presently, there's no market (for airlines). I've never supported spending public money for a terminal. Is the county ready for a major expansion? I really don't think so."

Though expansion could be an economic boon to the region, studies show property values and school test scores suffer from jet noise, Sullivan said.

The two candidates are running for an open seat on the council in District 2, which includes Mukilteo and Everett.

Democrat Kirke Sievers has held the seat 12 years, and term limits bar him from running for re-election.

The winner of the primary faces Republican Bill Cooper of Mukilteo, an author and security expert who is a former police chief.

He said his public safety experience will serve the county well. Also, his expertise in public administration can better streamline county government.

His campaign has raised about \$5,000, including a \$1,000 loan.

Cooper had planned to run for county sheriff but was asked by the GOP to instead run for County Council.

Politically active

Berkey said she became active in union and regional politics while working for the phone company. She managed local campaigns and was active in the Democratic party.

When state Rep. Pat Scott died, Berkey was appointed to replace her.

When Aaron Reardon was elected county executive in 2003, Berkey was appointed to his Senate seat. She won her first full Senate term in 2006.

Berkey ran for County Council in 1995 but lost to Sievers.

"Being a senator is a great job, but I have wanted for several years to serve in local government," Berkey said. "I think that the challenges facing the county are enormous and I'd like to help figure them out."

Berkey made headlines fighting in Olympia for a four-year independent university in Snohomish County. Also, she won approval for her bill to freeze the damaged credit of identity theft victims.

Steeped in government

For more than two decades, Sullivan has been steeped in city and county government.

"I cut my teeth on local government and I'd like to get back," Sullivan said.

To earn extra credit in college, he ran for Mukilteo City Council. He won and later served two terms as Mukilteo mayor.

Sullivan's election to the state Legislature in 2001 gave control of the state House to Democrats.

Sullivan has worked as a county policy analyst and is coordinator of Snohomish County Tomorrow, a growth management advisory group.

Trekking to Olympia four months a year keeps him from his family, and a County Council job would be closer to home.

"I'm qualified, I miss my family and I want to come home," Sullivan said.

Sullivan is one of the most prolific bill writers in Olympia, with up to 60 bills a year covering issues such as transportation and clean air, he said.

He won a temporary exemption for farmers statewide after Jefferson County farmers were threatened with strict environmental buffers.

He said he has aggressively worked to help mobile home park tenants with state funding.

To help, Snohomish County needs its own housing trust fund or a revolving account to be a local bank to help seniors facing a housing crisis, Sullivan said.

The two campaigns are neck and neck in fundraising.

Sullivan said his feet are throbbing from going door to door; Berkey said she is focusing on political signs and mailings.

Berkey has spent about half of the nearly \$49,000 she raised for her campaign.

Sullivan has raised nearly \$52,000 but has spent about \$44,000 of it.

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District 2 candidates

Jean Berkey

Party: Democrat

Occupation: State senator in 38th Legislative District

Experience: Political campaign manager during the 1980s and 1990s. Appointed to the state House of Representatives in 2001. She ran in 2002 and was appointed to the state Senate in 2004. She was elected to her first full Senate term in 2006.

She is chairwoman of the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance committee and serves on the higher education and transportation committees.

She worked for years in accounting, engineering, human resources and property management.

Age: 68

City: Everett

Bill Cooper

Party: Republican

Occupation: Corporate security investigator for Microsoft

Experience: Retired police chief of Bainbridge Island. Former highway safety program manager. Former police commander and officer.

Age: 55

City: Mukilteo

Brian Sullivan

Party: Democrat

Occupation: State representative in 21st Legislative District and Snohomish County Tomorrow coordinator, a growth management advisory group made up of cities.

Experience: Mukilteo City Council, 1985-1989. Mukilteo mayor, 1990-1997. Elected to the state House of Representatives in 2001.

Current chairman of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee and a member of the

House local government and transportation committees.

Former owner and manager of a pizza and brewery in Mukilteo; former policy analyst for the county executive.

Age: 49

City: Mukilteo

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