Maria McLeod: Today is January 22, 2009, and I’m interviewing Nancy Rust in the third of a series of four interviews. Last interview we left off when you were telling me, Nancy, about your interest in environmental causes. I’ve been thinking about something you mentioned before, but I don’t think we talked about in detail, which was this issue of Milwaukee Road and the Milwaukee Road right-of-way, allowing public access. Can you explain what Milwaukee Road is, where it’s located, the nature of the bill, and your part in the work leading up to getting a bill passed, which allowed for public access?

Nancy Rust: Well, the Milwaukee Road is the route of the old Milwaukee Railroad, which went all the way across our state. It was purchased by the Legislature in my first term. The state paid $3 million to acquire the right of way. That included all of the bridges and a bridge across the Columbia River. Because we’d been strong bicycle riders, I was really hopeful to make it be a bicycle trail all the way across the state. Well, there was a lot of opposition from the people who lived along it because – although they’d had a railroad, an abandoned railroad where hobos could have walked on it – they were very fearful of having public access. Although my original hope was to have it open all the way, we compromised. It opened as far as the first tunnel, which was pretty short, and I think it was either 19 or 21 miles. For the rest of the trail people had to give notice to have access, so it wasn’t just open to the public to just go on it. But it turned out to be a great success. So a few years later, when the bill was not in my committee – it was in a different committee – public access went all the way to the Columbia River.

It’s not paved, and I have not bicycled on it myself because we have skinny tire bicycles. But people can bicycle on it all the way to the Columbia River. Eventually it could connect with this wonderful trail in Idaho that we have biked on, which is paved. So, I’m really quite proud that we
managed to do that. It worked out OK to open a small section at first because the people who had worried about it realized that it wasn’t a problem.

MM: And you think you may have introduced and sponsored the bill in your first term, like in ’81 or ’82?

NR: My first term, no, I wasn’t involved in it because of course you know I was a freshman. But that was when we bought it. Actually one of the Democrats who was sitting right in front of me was the one who was really working hard on it. He didn’t run for election the next year in ’82, or it probably would have been his bill. But anyhow, we did work hard with the people. The backcountry horsemen were very prominent in getting the bill passed.

MM: Because this created a path for them, too?

NR: Yes, because it’s also for horseback riding. But I envisioned it for bicycling; that was my interest. But we walked on it for a while, and it’s pretty
heavy gravel. So, I don’t want to bicycle on that myself.

**MM:** It wouldn’t be fun to fall over into that. Where did the actual old railroad line run, from where to where?

**NR:** It went all the way across the state. But the trail, at that time, started in Easton, which is just on the other side of the Snoqualmie Pass. Then the rest of it has been acquired later.

**MM:** Are there some parks along the way, too?

**NR:** Well, the whole thing is part of the Parks Department.

**MM:** So this next question jumps to a completely different topic here, but in the last interview we talked about a workers’ right-to-know bill. I wonder how this bill is related to the Worker and Community Right-to-Know Act passed in 1986, which resulted in the Workers and Communities Right-to-Know Program? Also, what was your involvement and work in getting this bill passed?

**NR:** You know, I don’t remember the earlier bill. The bill that I worked on was the Workers Right-to-Know Bill, which was sponsored by Phil Tal-madge, who was a senator. We had a good working relationship. We had a very slim majority that year and the Republicans were able to get enough Democrats to vote with them on a lot of issues, and a lot of amendments, so the bill was weakened, but I did my best to hold it together. I remember talking to Phil several times during the process about how we were having problems. But it has worked out to be a very good bill.

The whole issue that was so important was that, in the old days, people did hazardous work, but they knew it was hazardous. I mean if they worked in the mines, or they worked at sea, they knew the hazard. But today they don’t, unless it’s posted, because of the chemicals that they’re using. Later, I went to visit the Boeing Plant, and I saw they had posted the right-to-know material that we required. So, that’s why it’s so important. Otherwise, people get into these jobs without knowing the hazards.

**MM:** Also, this included communities, too. It says workers’ and commu-
nities’ right-to-know. It seems like if you’re living next door to a certain industry, you might want to know what the output was.

**NR:** Yes, right.

**MM:** But the other issue I was reading about was that, as a result of this legislation, doctors can now be aware and informed of the chemicals their patients are exposed to. In the old days, as you said before, workers didn’t always know what chemicals they were exposed to, and doctors didn’t know what their patients were reacting to.

**NR:** Right.

**MM:** Let’s see, I wanted to jump to 1994, when you helped to pass an amendment to the Hazardous Waste Management Act of 1976. Your amendment was considered landmark legislation, giving the state broad authority on how and where hazardous waste was treated and stored. Prior to this legislation, how did local municipalities, local authorities, handle the disposal of hazardous waste? And, once you transferred this authority to the state government, what were the challenges of passing that legislation?

**NR:** This is something that I worked with Betty Talbot on during the interim. She was a lobbyist for the League of Women Voters, but she had a lot of background in the issue. It gave the power to pre-empt local government because of the NIMBY, you know, “not in my backyard.” These facilities had to go somewhere. The bill did a lot for negotiation and for mitigation for any local government that had to take it. Actually it hasn’t gone into effect because we don’t have incineration facilities in the state. Our hazardous waste goes to Oregon, but we were expecting that we would.

But another bill that also was one of my victories was requiring industry to plan for their hazardous waste, to plan to try to reduce it and so forth. That was another time when we really had to compromise, and the staff worked so hard. They kept coming up with different versions that industry would accept. Industry was so intent on not being able to show any trade secrets. So we ended up with all they had to do was plan, they had to plan. The result of the planning determined that they could get rid of a lot of hazardous waste by doing things in a different way, and it ended up that
there was less need for hazardous waste disposal. But it does go to Oregon, and we don’t have a hazardous waste incinerator.

**MM:** Right, yes. People fought that, right? They didn’t want a hazardous waste incinerator in this state, right, which was within the amendments to the Hazardous Waste Management Act. The law states: “It is the intent of the Legislature to pre-empt local government’s authority to approve, deny, or otherwise regulate disposal and incineration facilities and to vest in the Department of Ecology the sole authority….”

**NR:** Oh, no they didn’t want the incinerator. But, you know, some of these things you have to have. Right now they’re trying to build a jail in the suburban areas of King County, and nobody wants it of course, but what are you going to do? Those are called “LULUS,” locally undesirable land uses.

**MM:** Oh, “lulu.” I like that.

**NR:** [laughs] But we really got into the NIMBY. Because nobody wants these things, and somehow you’ve got to put them somewhere.

**MM:** This is unrelated to hazardous waste, but still related to your work as an environmentalist’s legislator. When I was looking through your campaign materials, I came across this Republican, Lincoln Loehr, who ran against you in 1986. He was apparently a respected oceanographer, according to his campaign materials. And he said, there’s a quote right in his campaign material, stating that you were, “simply not qualified to deal with these technical issues,” referring to your work on the Environmental Affairs Committee. Then I ran across a *Seattle Times* article that stated that Lincoln had gotten, quote, “fired up after Rust refused to let him testify before the Environmental Affairs Committee during legislative session.” So, I wondered if you could talk about that campaign.

**NR:** Well, one of the problems with our legislative committee was that we were very restricted for time. We had a two-hour session and someone else came into the room after. I finally did let him testify. The first time I think we ran out of time. He went on and on, and we actually have tape of that,
or we did have a tape of that because partisan staff got a hold of it when I was running against him. I was being very patient, and I said, “Mr. Loehr, you have to bring this to a close.” And then I’d say it again. I was really very polite.

Actually, it turned out that Lincoln Loehr was my most qualified opponent. Eventually I did tell him that. We turned out to be very friendly in the end. Even during the campaign, in spite of what he said, which really cut to the bone, we would be cordial in the meetings when we had to go together to speak. Then we would talk about, “Well, when are we going to meet again?” “What is the next one?” And so forth.

But he was after something we could not have done. According to Lincoln Loehr, we did not need to have secondary treatment in Puget Sound.

**MM:** You’re talking about sewage treatment plants?
NR: Sewage treatment. The federal government was requiring us to do it; we had to do it, and he didn’t think we did. So, I guess that’s why I cut him off the first time, because we had to do it.

MM: Well, why would an oceanographer say that?

NR: I don’t know. There was a group of people, people I had to fight, who didn’t think it was necessary, because it all got diluted. Well, studies have shown that Puget Sound goes around in a circle. It just boggles my mind that he was against this and he was a scientist, and I wasn’t, although I do have a scientific background. But it turns out he was a liberal Republican; he was pro-choice. Then he worked for their caucus the next session, and I got so I couldn’t stand that he was there all the time, watching our committee meetings. Then, eventually – I think it was my last campaign, or the one before it – he had a yard sign for me.

MM: Oh, he did?

NR: That’s why I said eventually we got to be good friends. He had me come to talk to his Kiwanis Club. That’s when I told the group that he had been my most qualified opponent.

MM: Did you get a laugh?

NR: Yes, I think everyone appreciated it. Anyhow, well you know I always campaigned harder than I needed to, and I just kept on doing it.

MM: How did you fare in ’86 in the race against him?

NR: I did quite well (earning 61 percent of the vote). I was never close. Even my first term it wasn’t close. It was never close, but I always thought it would be.

MM: When you say you just worked really hard, were you always kind of anxious about your campaigns?

NR: Well, yes, because of my opponents. You see, I chaired the Envi-
ronmental Affairs Committee, and I always had a lot of opponents, people who didn’t want me there. My opponents were always very well funded. One year I was the business people’s number one target. That might have been the year of Lincoln Loehr; I don’t know what year it was. So, I was a fanatic Campaigner, I doorbelled every day, all summer long. My husband helped me, and the children helped me.

**MM:** You were also a target. I don’t know this group, but I read that you were targeted by the Conservative Agenda. It was capitalized as if it’s a group. Is the Conservative Agenda a group?
EDUCATION

Providing a quality education system is the first duty of the legislature. Our future depends on our children, but our children depend on their education — today. We must ensure that they receive the best there is to offer — both in K-12 and higher education.

Saving money through cut-rate schools is bad economics, while paying for a skilled and educated workforce is the best investment we can make.

ENVIRONMENT

Pollution from toxic substances is the greatest danger to our environment today and is a grave threat to public health. As Chair of the Environmental Affairs Committee, Nancy Rust has and will continue to work to control hazardous waste problems and nuclear waste threats. And, she will carry on the battle to protect Puget Sound and our other treasured Northwest resources.

TAX & BUDGET

Government financing is a never-ending struggle to make tax obligations as fair and equitable as possible. Whether it is Gramm-Rudman style restrictions or a federal tax overhaul that shifts the burden in our state, we must be ready to meet the challenge and balance our system accordingly. We must work away from a system that places the heaviest load on those least able to shoulder it.

1. As your state representative, Nancy Rust is your direct line to Governor Booth Gardner to let him know how the First district feels about issues such as taxes. 2. Nancy Rust takes a break from the hectic legislative session to help others, including daughter Martha (right), participate in the process. 3. Back on the House floor, Nancy Rust tells the rest of the state just where the First district stands.

1986 Campaign Flyer
NR: I don’t know what that was, but it was mostly the business groups that targeted me – the same ones that have been backing Republican Dino Rossi in his runs for governor.

MM: So, what you were doing was considered impeding on their ability to build and make money?

NR: Well, they couldn’t get bills through my committee.

MM: [laughs] What kind of bills did the building industry bring to your committee?

NR: You know, I don’t remember particularly. But you know my job was to set the agenda, and so as a committee chair that’s your power. If it was a bill that I didn’t like, I didn’t put it on the agenda.

MM: That must have been difficult.

NR: There’s a lot of criticism of committee chairs for doing it. But I did it, too. Of course, a lot of people appreciated it. But I figured that was what I was there for.

MM: Did you discuss those issues in caucus? I mean when you’re a committee chair do you talk to other committee chairs about how they’re handling things? Is there talk in caucus about keeping bills off calendars, or strategizing? Did you talk to Helen Sommers about that?

NR: Yes, of course Helen and I were roommates. After the second year of my second term I roomed with Helen, and we talked about a lot of bills. And especially we talked about bills in the Appropriations Committee. In the caucus we went over every bill, and the committee chair explained the bill.

MM: The bills that were going to make it to the floor?

NR: The bills that were on the floor, yes. We never voted on a bill without caucusing first. That was a time when people could ask stupid questions.
MM: And the press wasn’t there; they were closed-door caucus meetings, right?

NR: Yes, it was the one abrogation to the Open Meetings Act. The press wasn’t there.

MM: What were your caucus meetings like? Were they lively?

NR: Sometimes very lively! I mean people let their hair down and yelled at each other, sometimes.

MM: Because Democrats don’t all agree. The Republicans probably don’t all agree, but are Democrats more diverse?

NR: Well, we didn’t lock up people in the way the Republicans did. So, you had to persuade the caucus members to vote for a bill.

MM: What about the difference between the House and the Senate, in

Nancy and Helen Sommers
terms of the tenor and tone and excitability?

NR: The Senate, of course, is smaller. I think they’re more collegial; it’s not as big a group, and they’re probably not as lively. A lot of people say the House is more fun. There were times when I could have run for the Senate, especially when Darlene Fairley ran in 1994 for Senator from our district, but I didn’t want to lose being a committee chair. Then, of course, we lost the majority, and so I lost it anyhow. But, yes, once you got to be a committee chair, you really want to stay where you are.

MM: Is it the same as when you join the Senate. If you’re a freshman, you don’t get to chair a committee, that kind of thing?

NR: Yes, you start at the bottom, or somebody already had what you wanted.

MM: Was there an equivalent to the House’s Environmental Affairs Committee in the Senate?

NR: Well, things are sometimes divided up differently.

MM: Did you have many conversations over the years with your counterparts in the Senate?

NR: Yes, I did.

MM: And who were those people?

NR: They were different people. Mike Kreidler was in the Senate when the Democrats were in control. Mike had been in the House. After the bills passed the House, I was right over there, talking to him.

Then during that time we passed our really big bills, oil spill and the air bill, the Republicans were in control. But Jack Metcalf, who was a conservative Republican, was very cordial. They had combined the Natural Resources Committee with the Environment Committee in the Senate, and he hadn’t really wanted to do the environmental part. In the very beginning when I went to talk to Jack, we had lunch in the Senate cafeteria, and it was
there that he told me that he really wanted to concentrate on these other bills, and if I could get the bills passed through the House, he would try to get them passed for me.

MM: Wow, that’s kind of incredible.

NR: He did, it was very good. But then on the other hand, he passed some bills that came to my committee, and I didn’t want to do them. But anyhow, there were a couple of bills that dealt with solid waste, and he was really good on solid waste. He had a couple of bills on solid waste, and so I told the Speaker, “The bills have got to pass because they’re the only ones that I want.” And so they did. I think he was happy that we got those through.

MM: Is it quid pro quo? I mean, does he give you a bill, and you have to pass it?

NR: Well, they kind of expected something in return. But I wasn’t going to pass a bill that I didn’t like. I had to have hearings on them. You know, if they were House bills in the beginning, I didn’t schedule them. When they came over from the Senate, I did have to have a hearing, but I didn’t have to bring them up for a vote. And I didn’t do so if I didn’t like them. So, that’s why I had to get those solid waste bills through.

MM: Do you remember the nature of those solid waste bills?

NR: Well, one of them was setting up this agency, which afterward went private, that set up markets for recyclables. That was really good. Then there was another one, a big solid waste bill, and it came from the House. Anyhow, everyone had to deal with Metcalf for a couple of years, and then Karen Fraser had the committee. Of course, Karen was a friend from the beginning because Karen started out in the House and was on my committee. Karen, of course, is still there.

MM: That’s great. Let’s see. Let’s get to some of these other things, like the Puget Sound water quality. During your time in the Legislature, there were several significant environmental issues that came to the forefront.
One was the deteriorating quality of Puget Sound waterways caused by many different forms of pollution. Can you describe the events or issues which led to the passage of the Puget Sound Water Quality Act of 1985, and your part in this bill, or its origins?

NR: Well, that was one of Booth Gardner’s bill priorities. And Lorraine Hine had set up a separate committee that dealt with it. So it came through her committee, but I was on that. It set up the Puget Sound Water Quality Authority, which later got lost.

MM: It took a new name, wasn’t it the Puget Sound Action Team?

NR: Yes, that’s right. It came up for renewal when the Republicans were in control. [groans]

MM: Right, and then the first management plan came about in 1987, requiring updates every two years by law. So, that came from Booth Gardner to you; was that the trajectory?

NR: Well, Lorraine Hine had asked for this special committee. We met at some awful time, like 8 o’clock on Monday mornings, when nobody else was around. She wanted that, and she got it. So, it was her bill.

MM: She was caucus chair then, wasn’t she?

NR: Yes.

MM: Was she also on the Environmental Affairs Committee?

NR: No, but she wanted this special committee. I was on the committee, so that was my part.

MM: So, then there are a series of significant environmental disasters that happen, which are the oil spills that happen during your time in office. It’s sort of incredible.

NR: Yes.
MM: I think probably the most memorable in everyone’s mind is the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill, near Prince William Sound. But there was, in 1984, the SS Mobil, which grounded on Warrior Rock near Portland, and spilled. Then, in 1985 the ARCO Anchorage spills 239,000 gallons of crude near Port Angeles. In 1988, Olympic Tug and Barge spills 70,000 gallons of heavy oil near Shannon Point at the entrance to Guemes Channel. In 1988, a December collision between a tugboat called Ocean Service and the Nestucca spills 231,000 gallons of number six fuel oil near the mouth of Grays Harbor. Then of course, as I mentioned, is the Exxon Valdez disaster in 1989, which resulted in a spill of more than 10.8 million gallons, oiling 1,300 miles of shoreline. My question about this is, what happens when you’re in office and these spills come about? How does legislation begin to happen? And what is the legislative response?

NR: Well the first bill that came to me dealing with oil spills was as a result of the ARCO Anchorage spill. ARCO was the best company to have a spill.

MM: What do you mean by that?

NR: Because they’re very good about being responsible for it. But the state spent more money in evaluating it than they got back from ARCO. So ARCO had a bill – this was before the big oil bill – they had a bill, the details of which I don’t remember, but basically it meant that they would pay for clean up, and they didn’t have to do all these studies. It was, in a sense, a win-win situation.

Up until that time, oil companies always supported my opponents. But working on that bill, I developed a good working relationship with a lobbyist, who was working on this other bill, which was more technical. After Exxon Valdez, we had a short regular session (January 8 – March 8, 1990). We put together what we could in a short time. We got an awful lot of heat for it, because it didn’t do enough. It was so frustrating. I took big heat from the Sierra Club, because we didn’t do enough. They wanted us to require double hulls. Double hulls were still on the books as being required! Actually it was ARCO that had taken the case (Ray vs. ARCO) to the Supreme Court, and the court ruled against it under the interstate commerce. So, we couldn’t do that. We did what we could.

So, then we kept working and working, and we put together a bill
that was very comprehensive. It didn’t just have cleanup; it had a lot of prevention. You mentioned Jim Horn somewhere in your prepared questions. Jim and I had a really good working relationship.

**MM:** And what was Jim Horn’s role at the time?

**NR:** He was the ranking Republican.

**MM:** Was he on your Environmental Affairs Committee?

**NR:** He was on my committee; he was the ranking Republican on my committee. We had a lot of extra meetings. Larry Phillips was on my com-
mittee. He is now on the King County Council, running for executive. He was very anxious to be included in all the meetings we had. We had a lot of special meetings, which were always open; they weren’t closed meetings, and the stakeholders would come. The first meeting I planned was for a time that Jim couldn’t come but Larry could. I planned it so that I could attend, as could Larry. I could only choose a time when Jim could come, or a time when Larry could come. So, I chose the time that Larry could come, and Jim came too. He didn’t go to the meeting that he was supposed to go to; he came to this meeting. He told me that he really wanted to have the meetings at a time when he could come. So, we decided to meet in the evening. Our staff person lived in Seattle and was commuting. He hated it. But he was really good. That was Harry Rinehart – really good. He also was very faithful because, of course, that was his job.

We held and attended all these evening meetings, trying to reach an agreement. And we finally did. It was partly because the environmentalists wanted to require the tugs, and the industry didn’t. I finally said, “You know, I can’t say myself what we need to do.” We appointed a temporary committee. It wasn’t the Office of Marine Safety, but something related to harbor safety. They were to make the recommendation. That way, we’d have the experts making the recommendation as to whether or not tankers needed a tug.

Actually, our committee went on a trip. We went up to Port Angeles and boarded one of the big tankers and rode it all the way to Fairhaven, in south Bellingham. The tug was with us all the time. The tug used to not meet them in Port Angeles. Instead, they would catch up with them later, or something. But that was one of the requirements of the bill.

**MM:** It seems there were a few related bills that passed pretty quickly, before the big oil spill legislation. House Bill 2242, which was passed in 1989, established requirements that vessels transmitting state waterways have proof of financial responsibility. So it’s sort of like insurance, which is important. Before that time, it seems it wasn’t required.

Then a Senate bill, which also passed in ’89, established the Washington State Maritime Commission.

Then House Bill 2494 establishes the Department of Ecology’s Preparedness and Response program in 1990. The prevention part isn’t there yet. But the Preparedness and Response Program give the authority
to allow large commercial vessels that transfer oil to have oil contingency plans. But then there’s this flurry of legislative activity when the *Exxon Valdez* spill made international news. So the Legislature and Congress—

**NR:** Congress passed OPA 90.

**MM:** OPA 90 – Oil Pollution Act of 1990. Did federal legislators turn to Washington state or to Alaska, and ask, “Okay, what’s going on there?” I mean, were you writing to them, urging them to pass federal legislation?

**NR:** No. It was all separate. But OPA only deals with cleanup. And our big bill dealt with both prevention and cleanup. We wanted our own money for cleanup, in case we couldn’t get the federal money. So, our bill was really separate and stronger because we dealt with prevention.

**MM:** But isn’t there some problem with a state dictating what certain vessels must do in terms of prevention, because the state doesn’t have jurisdiction in what’s considered international waters?

**NR:** I know that was a big problem in the end when it went to the Supreme Court. But during the passage of our bill we had great support from ARCO. That’s the only reason we got it through, I’m sure.

**MM:** What was the advantage to ARCO?

**NR:** The person who wanted to see the passage of this legislation was the vice president of transportation for ARCO in Los Angeles. He wanted it. He was that one person who was responsible. He came up several times and talked to me. He said he’d wake up in the middle of the night shivering because he was afraid there had been an oil spill. He didn’t want an oil spill.

**MM:** Was he a representative for ARCO?

**NR:** He was the vice president in charge of transportation – a big guy in ARCO. He didn’t want an oil spill. As I said before, *ARCO Anchorage* was the best one to have an oil spill because they were responsible for cleanup. They wanted the legislation.
The other thing is ARCO is different from the other oil companies because all of their ships were owned by ARCO. All of the men on the ships were employees of ARCO. So, they had more control. They thought they were cleaner, and better. They wanted the other companies to come up to their standards. Also, I think they wanted to be the one to have the Alaska business if we opened up the ANWAR. They wanted to be known as the most environmentally friendly oil company.

At one point there were so many amendments to the bill in the Senate, I told the lobbyist that even though I really wanted the bill to pass, that maybe we should just wait until next year. She said, We can’t let that happen. They got the amendments off.

The other thing is that the senator who was in charge of negotiating the bill had been on the conference committee to come up with the final draft of the Growth Management Act, and he didn’t want to go through that kind of negotiation again. I kept telling him that, if an amendment passed, we were going to go to conference. I kept threatening that. Well, we would have. But we didn’t want to do that. Anyhow, it came through the Senate without amendments.
The bill also established the Office of Marine Safety, because the Department of Ecology was going to work on cleanup. And the Office of Marine Safety was more in charge of prevention.

**MM:** So, the Office of Marine Safety was established in 1991 with a sunset rule attached to it, basically a provision to terminate the program by June 30, 1997.

**NR:** It had the sunset rule because the Boeing Company got their handle on it. It didn’t have anything to do with them. But, you know, they were there on everything. They objected to setting up a new agency. So, being responsible people, we put a sunset clause on it. It went through the sunset review, and the recommendation was to continue it. But, by the time the Office of Marine Safety was to end due to the sunset clause, the Republicans were in control, and they let it go. The oil companies we worked with were all ones that refine in Washington state, so they were captive. I think ARCO pulled the other ones along.

Since the bill set up an account where we put money for oil spills, we let the oil companies fund it the way they wanted to because they were willing to fund it, so we let them do it.

Intertanko, which is a conglomeration of other oil companies, took the bill to court and won on this interstate issue. Whereas our staff people, because the original requirement for double hulls had been thrown out, our staff people tried to make the bill do everything that was not an interstate issue, but nevertheless it lost on several prevention issues. It was the strongest bill in the country, and they objected to having had stronger regulations in Washington.

**MM:** We just went through a lot of years. I’m going back to 1989, and I’m going to come up to ’94 with Intertanko. So, OPA passes in 1990, but before OPA passes, you had written a letter dated May 3, 1989, which I did not see, to members of Congress.

In your files at the Washington State Archives, I noticed several return letters to you from members of Congress. U.S. Senator Brock Adams writes back to you on May 5 of 1989, enthusiastically responding, and talks about introducing the Puget Sound Tanker Safety Act of 1989. He advocates for double hulls. And then Rod Chandler, U.S. Representative,
writes back to you in June of ’89. He talks about legislation he sponsored, and about shifting responsibility for cleanup from government to the guilty party. He encourages stricter standards. These are two-page letters I’m summarizing in a few sentences, by the way. In June of 1989, U.S. Representative Walter Jones writes suggesting stronger background checks for captains because the issue with Exxon was that the captain was found to have been drinking. He had also had a history of DUIs, I believe.

NR: Right. That was part of the prevention. And they had to speak English. They have to speak English in the airlines, as English is the international language.

MM: For safety reasons?

NR: For safety reasons, they have to be able to speak English.
MM: So, was the *Exxon Valdez* captain not an English speaker?

NR: No, I think he was just drunk.

MM: Okay. [laughs]

NR: Our bill also included these other foreign vessels; they didn’t have to be oil tankers. It was the fuel the vessels carried that could potentially spill that was the issue. The bill included *all* ships. The oil companies were maybe more responsible. It was these rusty freighters that come in, and the crew doesn’t speak English, and they have all this fuel – like the *Nestucca* – bunker fuel in their hold. That’s what a lot of the spills are; they’re not necessarily oil tankers. I thought that sometimes they were more of a threat, something coming from the Philippines, or Hong Kong, or wherever. You know, in a rusty old vessel.

MM: Senator Slade Gorton also wrote back to you, but not until September. But he wrote a longer letter than the others. He writes about his Senate bills.

NR: Oh, did he?

MM: These are letters that were entered into the records at the State Archives. He talks about the bill that passed, such as Senate Bill 686, Oil Pollution Liability and Compensation Act of 1989. Then he introduced the Corporate Environmental and Responsibility Act. It didn’t pass. He offers an amendment, which also is defeated, but it does get passed in a slightly different form, sponsored by a different senator later.

John Miller had written to you in April of 1989 before your May letter. He wrote to you right away.

NR: You know he was very good about writing.

MM: Representative John Miller, where was he from?

NR: He was from here, from my district.
MM: He said he and Congressman Norm Dicks visited Prince William Sound. The National Guard had been called in, and there were all these other responders, but they didn’t have a very good contingency plan on how to approach it. He wrote about a lack of good coordinating efforts.

When you were working on all this, or after you’ve passed these bills, there was another oil spill in 1991 at the Texaco Refinery at March Point in Anacortes. That spill consisted of 210,000 gallons of crude oil. After that, you passed House Bill, ESHB 1027, which added the prevention component to spill legislation.

NR: Well, we had two bills. The first one was in the short session. And we put together what we could, and it was criticized. In the Seattle P-I [Seattle Post-Intelligencer], Shelby Scates said it wasn’t worth a Kleenex to pick up oil. And then the big bill came in the long session, which would have been in ’91.

MM: So, this must be it, House Bill, ESHB 1027, in ’91. I have here, “Rust and Horn passed ESHB 1027 adding prevention to spill and response preparedness. Requiring tank vessels and oil facility operators that would have oil spill prevention plans funded by a nickel a barrel tax on oil imported into Washington state.”

NR: Right, the nickel a barrel was for cleanup. It was important that we have our own cleanup, I remember arguing for that.

MM: And it gave Washington state the strongest laws in the nation?

NR: Right. That was the big bill.

MM: You mentioned the Intertanko suit. In 1994 the Office of Marine Safety implemented regulations requiring the prevention plans. It takes this long to get people to do this. It goes into effect in June of 1995. So, it’s taken all these years after Exxon Valdez in ’89. In July of 1995, one month after the requirement to implement prevention plans, the International Association of Independent Tankers, Intertanko, brings suit against Washington state, or I should say names Locke who was governor at the time, Gary Locke. It takes five years to resolve this, eventually going to the United
States Supreme Court, which sided with Intertanko. The results were that the Office of Marine Safety could *not* create or impose such regulations and that it has to be under the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard.

NR: You know that was really bitter, and it was unanimous, they all voted against it, the Supreme Court. Someone said afterward, it was a remark, probably by Ruth Bader Ginsberg, that the federal government, Congress, needs to make stronger regulations. I need to bring that up again, write to Jay Inslee. But then the Democrats have been in the minority. And then we had the big natural gas explosion in Bellingham.

MM: That’s right, the Olympic Pipeline explosion that happened on Whatcom Creek in 1999.

NR: Yes. So, I know that Congress was reacting to that. They haven’t brought up a strong oil spill bill, but the time has come for it. But the remark was made that Congress needed to pass better prevention laws.

MM: And then did anything happen after that in Congress, after OPA?

NR: No they haven’t, and OPA is really for cleanup. It’s a big pot of money for cleanup. Congress needs to pass something for prevention. The time has come. Jay Inslee is our congressman. And he’s really into this clean energy right now.

MM: And how did you know Jay Inslee?

NR: He was from the Yakima area, from Selah, practicing law there, and he sat next to me during his first term in the House in 1989. I was the one who had to poke him when we had organizational rules when you’re supposed to vote with the Party. Ever since then, whenever I’m at a meeting and he’s there, he always recognizes me. He’s so nice about it. He says I’m the one who taught him how to be a legislator. So, I have his ear. He was elected to Congress in 1991, and defeated in ‘93. He was from Seattle in the first place. He played basketball at Ingraham High School, and his parents lived in my district. They always had a sign for me, so I knew his parents, too. But then after he lost, Jay and his family moved back to Bain-
bridge Island. Then he defeated a man named Rick White in 1998, the guy who defeated Maria Cantwell. I worked really hard on Jay’s campaign that time.

**MM:** That’s really terrific that you could see these people come along, like you raised lawmakers. You’ve been with some of these people since they were young.

**NR:** Oh, and Patty Murray. She was from our district. She worked for Donn Charnley who was in the House, and then he was only in the Senate for two years because of redistricting. Anyhow, she was working for Donn’s campaign, and we did a lot of things together. But Maria Cantwell, Jay Inslee, and I were all in the House together. Patty was in the Senate, and she was from our district, a neighbor. She lived about 10 blocks away.

**MM:** And now there she is in Washington, D.C. There aren’t that many
degrees of separation between you and our new president, in a way, because you have connections to these Washington state people there in D.C.

**NR:** Yes, but he doesn’t know who I am.

**MM:** I know, but it must feel kind of exciting, even more exciting because you’re in politics.

**NR:** Oh, yes. People ask me if I’m still in politics, and I say, “Well, once you get all the way in, it’s hard to get all the way out.”

**MM:** Yes, like you said, you campaigned for Peter Goldmark, and you arranged a fundraiser. You have a draw; people listen to you.

**NR:** I know I do. I’ve already agreed to endorse two people running for City Council who I didn’t endorse four years ago because of a difference. But that’s all been settled. A compromise has been made, and so I agreed to it. They were just really anxious to have my name.

**MM:** Who are these people?

**NR:** Cindy Ryu and Janet Way. I’ve known Janet for a long time. When I was a legislator, I was talking to her about environmental issues. She’s a city councilmember. It all was involved with this Aurora Improvement Plan and the group of people who were opposing it. Janet and Cindy were supported by this group that was opposed to the plan. So, I didn’t support them; I supported their opponents. But that’s been all smoothed over, and they’ve been doing a good job. Janet’s really great on the environment. I’m working with her now; we’re working on a new tree code for Shoreline.

Then Cindy asked for my support, too. I thought she might be running for the city council because of her own special interest. She owns a little development on Aurora. I talked to her about it, and she said that’s how she first got involved. But now she knows that there are a lot of other issues. Also, she said she was going to back Janet all the way. I know that Janet’s going to push this tree code that we’re working on, and Cindy is going to support her on that issue, which is really important, so I decided to support her.
MM: I also wanted to talk about the Model Toxics Control Act because that’s come up – the Superfund law for the state. It’s kind of complicated how that got passed. It was approved by state voters as an initiative in 1988. It was initiative number I-97. It states, “Since the adoption private parties are potentially liable under the act to fund cleanups conducted in Washington. Model Toxics Control Act is the state counterpart to the federal Superfund law, also known as CERCLA. The Washington State Model Toxics Control Act creates a comprehensive regulatory scheme to identify, investigate, and cleanup contaminated properties.”

NR: But the Superfund bill was a big thing. And Jolene Unsoeld was the prime person who worked on that.

MM: Was she a representative for the House?

NR: Yes, she was on my committee.

MM: And did she end up going to Congress?

NR: She ended up going to Congress in 1989. It was her bill, and it was major. It had to do with sites that were contaminated but were not designated as Superfund sites by the federal government. It was a state superfund law modeled after the national one, which has cradle-to-grave responsibility. And the tax we put on was to pay for the orphan sites. I didn’t work that hard on the bill, but I worked on other things later.

MM: How was her bill tied to this Initiative 97 – the “Superfund Initiative”?

NR: Well, Jolene Unsoeld had this big bill, which I just talked about. She compromised and compromised, and finally it came to the point that if there were any more amendments to the bill, the bill would be dead. Our Speaker, Joe King, said that. The industry people didn’t believe him. They passed another amendment on the floor. And Joe King said, Passed to Rules. That killed the bill. So, Jolene’s bill didn’t pass. Then there was an initiative to the Legislature.
So, the Speaker, Joe King, got together a group of people that were called “the four corners,” and the fifth corner was the governor’s office, but I wasn’t on that special task force. He didn’t appoint either Jolene or me, because we were too opinionated. Anyhow, they met all summer long, and eventually they decided that the bill was going to come to my committee, and they wanted me to come to the meetings. I wasn’t a member, but I came to the meetings. They came up with an alternative. When you have an initiative to the Legislature, either the Legislature can enact it, or they can refer it to the people at the next session, or they can have an alternative. Then both the initiative and the alternative go to the people.

**MM:** Oh, the alternative is “Measure 97B.” You had written to the Attorney General Ken Eikenberry in 1988 for an opinion regarding the ability to amend an initiative and alternative measure. Then he writes back and says that, according rules, you can’t amend an initiative to the Legislature.

**NR:** So the alternative was really very reasonable, and much better than even Jolene’s original bill. It was a compromise, and it was moving more to the center than Jolene’s bill, which, after it had been compromised was over here, and the initiative was over here [motioning in opposite directions]. This was more at center and was pretty much agreed to. So, that bill came, and I passed it through my committee because I was really responsible to do that. Some of the members in my committee were not happy, but it passed because the Republicans wanted it too.

But then the people voted for the initiative. That was partly because some of what the oil companies had been sending out in their bills, urging them to vote for the legislative alternative. I certainly could have lived with the legislative alternative. Some of the people thought, “Well, if the oil company wants this version, I want the other.”

Anyhow, they voted for the initiative, and it is very wide-ranging. I got involved in it a lot later because the money could be used for a lot of other things. I got other bills passed, and I was able to use the money out of there.

**MM:** So, did this initiative deal with the regulation of underground storage tanks and cleanup?
NR: No, there was a later bill about underground storage tanks.

MM: What did Initiative 97 address?

NR: Cradle-to-grave responsibility for hazardous waste. There was this site in Southern King County called Queen City Farms that had taken all this waste legally, from 1955 to 1964. That had tanks of all this awful stuff, buried drums of toxic waste and ponds that were used for dumping industrial hazardous waste, all of which was in close proximity to private wells. Well, the people like the Boeing Company, to take an example, had put their waste in this place legally before, for years. But now according to what passed, they’re still responsible for paying for the cleanup. The bill put a tax on the oil companies, and the money was to be used for orphan sites where the company had gone bankrupt, or where you couldn’t find the owners. But the federal Superfund law takes care of federally designated Superfund sites, like the Port of Tacoma.

MM: That’s the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, CERCLA.

NR: Right. The companies are responsible; they’re the ones that are designated under the federal law.

MM: Like the cleanup of Commencement Bay in Tacoma.

NR: Like Commencement Bay. The state law takes over from that, and we also have our own funding source. I actually used that bill in later years because the use of that money was very liberally stated as related to the prevention of pollution. So, I used it for a funding source. Some people weren’t very happy with that, but I did it. I was able to pass some other bills, and they got through the Appropriations Committee because we had a funding source for them.

MM: And when you’re talking about the state law, you’re referring to the Model Toxics Control Act. I have here what the website states: “Washington State Model Toxics Control Act creates a comprehensive regulatory scheme to identify, investigate, and cleanup contaminated properties.”
NR: Yes, you’re right. But the big Superfund law was Jolene’s baby, and her bill didn’t pass. And so then we had the initiative, and then we had the legislative alternative, and they voted for the legislative alternative, which was much better than the final bill that Jolene had had to compromise on.

MM: And she was trying to steer this through the House and into the Senate.

NR: It died in the House because somebody tried to amend it one more time.

MM: And Joe put it back to Rules.

NR: Yes, and Joe had always had the reputation of being more of a business Democrat, and so I think people were really shocked that he held to that. But Joe was always backing me. He was really good to work with. He was a strong leader.

MM: Nancy, I want to ask you a little bit about solid waste, because you did a good deal of work on solid waste as well. I know you were involved in bottle bill legislation as well.

NR: I worked on that in the League of Women Voters to require deposits on the bottles the way they do in Oregon.

MM: We didn’t get a bottle bill in Washington state, but you tried.

NR: But the good thing is after we passed our big solid waste bill in 1989, the “Waste Not Washington Act,” we started pickups of recyclables. If the garbage company offers garbage pickup they have to offer recycling pickup at no extra charge. People like to participate because they think they’re doing something good. We are doing just as well as Oregon and the other states that have a bottle bill.

MM: And do you remember what year?

NR: I introduced a bottle bill, probably in 1983, but there was too much
opposition, I didn’t move it out of committee. The big solid waste bill came later. Art Sprinkle was the lead on that. He was the sponsor of that bill.

**MM:** That would have been in 1988, the second new law, which was sponsored by Art Sprinkle of Snohomish, which calls for a study, Best Management Practices, of the quantity of types of garbage going to landfills. Then the bill that comes after that is Waste Not Washington, which was passed in 1989, that was SHB 1671.

**NR:** Yes, that was our big bill. And now, even in rural areas, they have to have a place for recycling. You have to go to a dump, what they now the call the transfer station. That happened as a result of that bill.

**MM:** That’s true; we didn’t have that option before that time. And Representative Art Sprinkle, he was in your committee?

**NR:** Yes. It turned out he was very hard to work with. But we got the bill through and it passed the Senate. He kept talking about what he was going to do when it went to conference. It didn’t go to conference; the Senate passed it.

I think the senators maybe didn’t want to deal with him. Anyhow, that was when Jack Metcalf was my counterpart in the Senate. He wanted the bill, too, because he was really good on solid waste. Then he had this bill that had to do with finding markets for recycling. I keep talking to the guy who was in charge of that because he has a place on Lopez Island, too, and I see him on the ferry. His company has gone private now.

**MM:** I remember that you were part of the Growth Management Act that passed in ’90 and ’91. You mentioned Joe King was good to work with, and I was thinking about his role with the GMA. The GMA came around the same time as the solid waste bill, and the oil spill legislation.

**NR:** Yes, the GMA was another thing he really wanted.

**MM:** I remembered that in 1989 the House passed the Growth Management Act, which died in the Senate. But Speaker Joe King brought together
a group of the committee chairs, and you were selected to bring forth this legislation. So, I just wanted to go back to that. You were called the “Steel Magnolias,” weren’t you?

NR: Yes, we were.

MM: And we can talk about that, too. I want to name the women: Busse Nutley, she was chair of Housing; Jennifer Belcher, chair of Natural Resources; Ruth Fisher, chair of Transportation; Maria Cantwell, Economic Development; Nancy, yourself, Environmental Affairs; Mary Margaret Haugen, Local Government. So, can you just talk about how that came about and what Joe King did to bring you all together, and why, during the 1990 session?

NR: Well, you know, I’ve always thought that the seed for this idea came when we had a retreat for our committee; the committee people were really very congenial. We had a weekend retreat at my place on Lopez, and talked
about some of the things we wanted to do in the future.

**MM:** Can you give me some background, say what the Growth Management was and why it was necessary at that time. This would have been I think in ’89; there had been some legislation they tried to pass that didn’t make it.

**NR:** The purpose of the Growth Management Act was to protect critical areas, and to stop urban sprawl, and to preserve open space. All of the growth counties, the counties that were growing by 10 percent or more were required to plan. But all counties and the cities within the counties were required to pass an ordinance to protect their critical or sensitive areas. We call them critical in Shoreline, but they were called sensitive in the legislation. So, that was very important because it stopped destroying these areas that should never be built upon. So, a lot of cities and counties decided to plan, even though they were not required to. The sensitive areas required planning by everybody, but a lot of cities and counties decided to do theirs anyhow, and funds were provided. But maybe it wasn’t enough in some places. The Growth Management Act is still controversial because people really, particularly living in the suburbs, suburban areas, fight more density. But on the other hand, they want to keep open space, and you can’t have both. People are driving all the way to Marysville to live in order to find housing, they’re driving on the highway and polluting the air, and it’s expensive for them to do that, too. So, there was a really big push to have more density near the places where people work.

**MM:** And can you tell me, what was Joe King’s role? Did he, as it was represented by the press, really push to have this legislation drafted – not only what was drafted, but why he went at it in a particular way. Why did he choose the six women committee chairs? I’ll read the names again: Busse Nutley, she was chair of Housing; Jennifer Belcher, chair of Natural Resources; Ruth Fisher, chair of Transportation; Maria Cantwell, Economic Development; Nancy, yourself, Environmental Affairs; Mary Margaret Hagen, Local Government.

**NR:** Well, we each sponsored a separate bill. Larry Phillips really was the one who worked hard on our part. I was the prime sponsor, but Larry went
to a lot of the meetings because it was the same year we did the oil spill and the big air bill so we had a very full year. [laughs] So, I’ll have to give a lot of the credit to Larry Phillips.

Anyhow, we did our part and the six bills that all came out of committee went to the Appropriations Committee. In the Appropriations Committee, they were put into one bill. Maria Cantwell was the prime sponsor of the big bill, and our names were all listed right below hers. Of course, anybody could sign on who wanted to.

**MM:** Why was Maria Cantwell listed as the prime sponsor?

**NR:** I couldn’t say that.

**MM:** Do you think that she had political aspirations beyond the House and it would have helped her to be prime sponsor, or you just don’t know?

**NR:** I really don’t know. Mary Margaret Haugen was also very involved. It’s funny because I knew Mary Margaret her first year, I sat next to her. And she really grew during the years. Now she’s one of the really powerful senators.

Anyhow, you know, I think Maria always did have higher expectations. She didn’t say anything, but she came to Seattle as a front person for Alan Cranston who was at that time running for president.

**MM:** Oh, I didn’t know that.

**NR:** Yes. Then he got caught up in that Keating Five Savings and Loan scandal. But she came here as a political animal. She’s not somebody like me who lived here and did the Girl Scouts, and the PTA, and the League of Women Voters, and it just kind of evolved. But when she ran the first time, she was the youngest female House member. Rick Bender had been the youngest male and Maria was a little older than Rick had been, but she was still in her twenties.

**MM:** So when you all sponsored separate bills, were those referred to collectively as the “Growth Management Act”?
NR: I don’t remember what their titles were, but we knew what they were destined to do.

MM: And did you have to vote for them separately?

NR: Oh yes, we voted for them in committee.

MM: Then they’d pass out of your committee, and then what was the trajectory after that?

NR: They went to the Appropriations Committee. See, any bill that had money on it went to the Appropriations Committee. So, these six bills all went to the Appropriations Committee.
MM: And you were on Appropriations at the time?

NR: Yes, I was.

MM: Did you have to explain to Appropriations what the GMA was?

NR: Well, in committee the staff explains the bills.

MM: Was this one of the bills where the Speaker, Joe King, said, this is a priority, and I’d like to see this passed out of committee?

NR: Yes, it was a priority of his.

MM: So, there’s a kind of push to get the thing passed, right?

NR: Yes.

MM: And this is when the Democrats had the majority?

NR: Oh yes, or we wouldn’t have been committee chairs.

MM: That’s right. I know that. Why am I asking that question?

NR: It turns out there is one Republican this year, and there has been one Republican who’s been a committee chair.

MM: Oh, I didn’t even know that could happen. That’s interesting. When it was the six of you, did you aspire to the nickname you were given, the “Steel Magnolias,” or did you think it was silly? What was your attitude among the six of you?

NR: I don’t know, I think they got a kick out of it. We all went over to the Senate together, the six of us, and testified in that committee, and, yes, we got a kick out of it.

MM: What was the reaction in the Senate to the six of you coming over and testifying, do you remember anything about that?
NR: Well, the Senate was Republican, and so the bill went to conference. Maria was the lead person in the House, and I guess she was just terrific in how she handled it. I wasn’t a witness to it, but everybody said she was marvelous. That poor guy from the Senate was having a hard time having to go to all these meetings. The oil spill bill came, and he had such a hard time. He hated to have to deal with that conference committee. So I would tell him that if an amendment passed, we’d go to conference. He didn’t want to go to conference. [laughing]

MM: In regards to the Growth Management Act, were you in favor of bottom-up or top-down legislation?

NR: You know, personally, I think I would have been more in favor of top-down, which is what the Shoreline’s Management Act is, top-down. But I know it was Mary Margaret who was really insisting that it be bottom-up.

MM: Why did you prefer the legislation be more top-down versus bottom-up?

NR: Well, I guess I was more of a regulator. Under the Shoreline Management Act, the plans had to be approved by the state, by the Department of Ecology. These Growth Management plans did not have to be approved, but they could be appealed, and that’s how it was bottom-up. Then they’re appealed to these regional entities. Well, there are several different boards that approve them. When somebody appeals, they go to the Puget Sound Board, and then there are a couple of others. Those people on those boards are appointed. So there could be a lot of differences in different parts of the state. Whereas the Shoreline Management Act, which is a managed form of growth, but just for the shorelines – those development plans have to be approved by the Department of Ecology.

MM: I have here in my notes that there was a special session extended from March 8 to April 1 of 1990 to get this legislation, the Growth Management Act, passed. It was signed into law on April 24, and then Governor Gardner vetoed 15 of the 89 sections. Do you remember any of that?
NR: No, I don’t, I don’t remember why he vetoed.

MM: Then there was the other portion, which was passed in 1991, which is why it’s historically stated as having passed in ’90 and ’91, because I think in ’91 you worked on some of the parts that were vetoed in order to get the whole thing passed. But I don’t have that history in front of me.

NR: It seems to me we did a little bit of it and then the next year we did the big one, the big part. And it was monumental work!

MM: And there was something else that contributed to the success, which you mentioned before, the fifth corner, the Governor’s office. I seem to remember a woman, a Republican in the Senate who was instrumental.

NR: Jeannette Hayner. That was why Joe King was so successful. He seemed to really get along with Jeannette Hayner, and she was the Senate Majority Leader, which is the big person in the Senate, the Majority Leader. Of course the Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate, but the real power comes from the Majority Leader, and it was Jeanette Hayner. We got a lot of major legislation through the opposite house, which was the opposite party.

MM: Then, after it the GMA passes, you said that you were assigned, after the House loses the majority, to a committee to defend the Growth Management Act.

NR: That was when we were in the minority, right, and they were trying to weaken the GMA. A lot of the counties wanted to get out of it, but the cities wanted to keep it. A lot of the time it was a conflict between the counties and cities. It was to the cities’ benefit because they had to draw their growth management boundaries, and that included where most of the money is since retail and other businesses and industries are mostly in the cities.

MM: And where were you sent to protect the Growth Management Act, what committee?
NR: I was sent to be on the Government Affairs Committee, because that's where the bill went. So, I made a lot of speeches, and then I was able to get enough Democratic votes that were significant to go over to the Senate when these bad bills passed the House. I would go over, and I would talk to Mary Margaret and tell her about all the amendments that had passed that were weakening the bill or the act. And she said, Oh, I'm not going to hear any of that stuff.

MM: What committee did she head?

NR: Whatever committee it was at that time in the Senate. See, now, she's head of Transportation, but then it was a different – sometimes the committees had different names in the Senate. It wasn't the Environmental Affairs Committee, but it was the one who dealt with it.

MM: In '95 your House was Republican majority but the Senate was still Democrat.

NR: The Republicans in the House thought they could pass the bills, but then they had to get through the Senate. But if we only had a couple of votes against a bill, then it would be very hard for the Senators to hold. But when the bills came over with a majority of the Democrats voting “no,” then that was a clear signal. So, that's what I worked for; I worked to get enough Democrats. There were some Democrats who didn't vote with me because I was too environmental. They did vote on the big environmental bills, but on some of these other things, they weren’t going to vote unless they were really pushed to do so.

Anyhow, that was my goal to get 35 or maybe even 40, depending on how many people we had, “no” votes on the floor.

MM: It’s not enough to pass the legislation, the GMA; then you have to protect it.

NR: Yes, it was enough to tell our counterparts in the Senate that the Democrats didn’t want the bill.

MM: To put the Growth Management Act in historical terms, is there
anything you can look to, any wilderness or land or areas that are undeveloped around you or in the state that you think, “Well, if we didn’t have the Growth Management Act, this would have happened.” Is there any?

NR: Well, you know we have our own personal problem. We live in Innis Arden, which is a community with a covenant. It’s a place where people have views of Puget Sound. We bought our lot in 1957, and it was completely wooded at the time. Our architect tried to protect every tree he could; so, we had a lot of trees.

Then later – probably in the 1980s, early ’81 maybe – the community passed an amendment to the covenant, which is a lot of work because you have to have so many signatures to pass an amendment. With this amendment, people could be required to cut and lower their trees to roof height. Our neighbor who was living next to us and other neighbors were pretty tolerant. At the time, we did cut down trees to give them a view. But we did that before this amendment had passed. Then there was a lawsuit to make it enforceable. When it finally did go into effect, a special master was appointed, and we were required to cut down our trees if our neighbors had asked. Between the time the amendment passed and it finally went into effect, the King County Sensitive Area Ordinance passed. And because of that, we did not have to cut all our trees because we were able to determine that we have a wetland.

Anyhow, that was the King County Sensitive Area Ordinance, which passed before the Growth Management Act. It was one of the things that made us believe that we could pass the GMA because King County had done it. One of the reasons for the Growth Management Act is to protect the sensitive areas. So there’s an example, and there must be other examples all over. You can’t develop within so many yards of a stream, a river, or a wetland. Ours is a small wetland, but at first the buffer was 50 feet that protected the trees. And you’ll notice when you come to our house we have a lot of trees. Then a couple of years ago, the City of Shoreline amended its ordinance, and now the buffer is 115 feet. So, it actually comes right up to the house. If we had wanted to expand our house in that direction, we would not be allowed to. So, yes, it’s working because all the cities and the counties have their ordinances where they have to protect the buffers.
MM: Well, that’s great. Nancy, this is a good end to the interview because it shows the effect of the law in concrete terms. Thank you.