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July 30, 2020

File No.: 5595-30 BC Ferries

Via email: Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Claire Trevena
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
PO Box 9055
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Trevena:

Re: BC Ferries Service Levels in the Islands Trust Area

On behalf of Islands Trust Council, I am writing to thank you for the provincial funding recently allocated to BC Ferries in order to halt the planned service reductions to some BC Ferries routes. Trust Council was deeply concerned about the impact of the planned service reductions on Trust Area communities. These communities are extremely dependent on affordable, reliable ferry service levels for their personal, social and economic well-being. We were also dismayed that there was no proper consultation with local Ferry Advisory Committees before these planned cuts were announced.

Trust Council understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on BC Ferries' finances, but feels that the planned service cuts were premature and did not take into consideration the natural increase in demand that would result from the phased BC Restart Plan. Moreover, local island economies have experienced the same devastating impacts from COVID-19 and are now in even more need of affordable, reliable, sufficient ferry service levels in order to recover and recoup the losses that have been incurred.

Access to ferry services is a basic and essential need for Islands Trust Area communities, both for residents' transportation needs and to support their tourism-dependent economies. Island communities will continue to be especially vulnerable to the impacts of unforeseen crises such as pandemics, natural disasters, and the ever-increasing impacts of climate change. We therefore urge the Province to put in place measures that will ensure that current service levels are maintained or improved to continue to meet local demand, irrespective of the financial uncertainties of BC Ferries. We further request that priority be placed on the involvement of Ferry Advisory Committees in all aspects of decision-making, to ensure that the needs of communities are well understood and protected.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Luckham
Chair, Islands Trust Council
pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca

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cc: BC Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing
Trust Area MLAs
President and CEO, BC Ferry Services Inc.
Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs
BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin) First Nation
Cowichan Tribes
Halalt First Nation
Homalco First Nation
Klahoose First Nation
K'ómoks First Nation
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lekwungen (Songhees) Nation
Lyackson First Nation
MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nation
Penelakut Tribe
Qualicum First Nation
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation
shíshálh First Nation
Snuneymuxw First Nation
Skwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation

SʔÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation
Stz'uminus First Nation
SXIMEŁŁ (Esquimalt) Nation
Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tseil-Waututh Nation
T'Sou-ke Nation
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) First Nation
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation
WJOŁŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation
WŚIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation
xʷməθkʷəŷəm Musqueam
First Nations Leadership Council
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group
Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society
Nanwakolas Council
Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council
Te'mexw Treaty Association
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website