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February 9, 2010

File Number: PG/14

The Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
P.O. Box 9055 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Premier Campbell and Minister Bond:

Re: BC Ferries Governance Review

I am writing on behalf of the Islands Trust Council to seek assurances that Islands Trust and island communities will be consulted as stakeholders during decisions regarding BC Ferries Services and to request that you broaden your review to also incorporate the advice of the Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs.

The Islands Trust Council has an active interest in BC Ferries' services to our communities and believes that good governance is rooted in involving communities in all decisions that affect them.

Our communities are struggling to remain diverse and to thrive in the face of the pressures created by reduced ferry services and ever-increasing ferry fares. Our success in promoting sustainable communities depends on an affordable, reliable and responsive ferry system.

Part Five of the Islands Trust Policy Statement, our primary guiding document, describes the Islands Trust's goal of sustaining island character and healthy communities. The underlying principles of this goal are:

- Most [residents] feel strongly that people of differing age groups and income levels should continue to have the opportunity to reside in island communities.
- The health of a community is influenced by numerous factors such as *economic security*, education, social support systems, the cleanliness and safety of the environment, and the availability of such necessities as educational and social services, *transportation*, affordable food and housing.
- Public involvement in decisions that affect a community is also critical to the health of that community.

As you review the Comptroller General's *Report on Review of Transportation Governance Models* we also encourage you to expand the scope of your review to include the recommendations made to Minister Falcon by the Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs in their [*Towards a Minor Routes Strategy for Coastal Ferry Service 2008*](#) discussion paper. These recommendations suggest that the transportation fee provided to BC Ferries by the Province should be increased as part of a strategy to sustain the ferry system on a sound financial footing. This would enable BC Ferries to provide reasonably priced ferry service to ferry-dependent coastal communities, thereby supporting the social and economic well-being of those communities.

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Within the last year, both the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities voiced their support for this approach by endorsing the following motion proposed by Islands Trust:

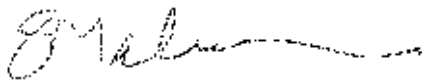
WHEREAS the transportation services provided by BC Ferries on minor routes along the south coast are as essential for ferry-dependent communities as the provincial road network is for other communities, and are an integral element of provincial tourism goals, yet have been subject to fare increases of as much as 120% over the last five years;

AND WHEREAS the British Columbia Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs have, through extensive research and analysis, proposed a minor routes strategy that supports the sustainability of island economies and the coastal ferry service;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Union of BC Municipalities request that the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure work with coastal communities and BC Ferries to develop a strategy for the minor southern coastal ferry routes, as proposed by the Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs.

In closing, we appreciate that the Province requested a review of the BC Ferries governance model. The Islands Trust Council would support amendments to the *Coastal Ferry Act* to reinforce the public service goals of the coastal ferry service and to require that economic and social considerations be taken into account when establishing service levels and service fees in the Coastal Ferry Services Contract.

Yours sincerely,



Sheila Malcolmson
Chair, Islands Trust Council

cc: Honourable Colin Hansen, Minister of Finance
Honourable Bill Bennett, Minister of Community and Rural Development
David Hahn, President and CEO, BC Ferries
Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland, Comptroller General
Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs
Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities
Union of British Columbia Municipalities
Trust Area MLAs
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website