



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR CITY OF PRINCE RUPERT

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July 21, 2011

Mr. Gord Macatee
BC Ferry Commissioner
Email: ferrycommissioner@shaw.ca

Dear Mr. Macatee;

Prince Rupert City Council has three issues I hope you will consider as you complete your review of the BC Coastal Ferry Act as they impact the economic well being of many BC communities.

Firstly, the two vessels on the north coast routes are functioning well. As communities grow, and demand increases, BC Ferries should be prepared to meet the demand. The north coast depends heavily on the ferry system for the movement of people and supplies. BC Ferries needs to enhance its outreach to the tourism operators to generate additional revenue which would offset increased operating and capital costs. There should be more joint promotion of routes between BC Ferries and the Alaska Marine Highway system to assist with this initiative.

Secondly, BC Ferries should abandon any plans to implement a Prince Rupert to Tsawwassen, via Port Hardy, ferry service. Prince Rupert City Council has concerns that Mr. David Hann of BC Ferries may continue to pursue within a year (2012), the implementation of a Prince Rupert to Port Hardy to Tsawwassen ferry service. It was not long ago that hospitality tourism operators and elected community leaders from Prince George to Prince Rupert, and on northern Vancouver Island, expressed to the then Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Honorable Shirley Bond, that implementation of such a service would have a drastic effect on the communities and businesses.

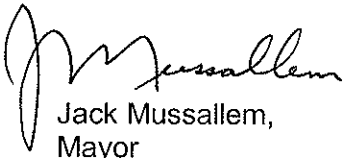
The proposed summer service would see a total departure from the existing travel pattern travelers, communities and tourism travel (bus and rail) service operators have facilitated for years and have come to rely upon. The existing service is a critical part of each community's financial well being and cannot be deliberately changed, nor tried for a three year period, without a negative economic impact to each community's hospitality tourism sector.

It is essential that the Prince Rupert to Port Hardy ferry service remain as it presently exists. Tourism Prince Rupert had previously presented information proving this existing ferry service can grow if promoted as such. The ferries, as they function now are an integral part of northern BC's regional tourism economy. Additionally, other users also depend on the ferries as they are viewed as an extension of the provincial highway system and are as vital to the northern regional economy as any road access.

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Finally, fares on the Northern Routes have increased dramatically over the past few years and have resulted in travel costs that are prohibitive for residents of the North Coast. Recent released information has demonstrated a drop of passengers on the northern routes of BC Ferries. Fare increases cannot continue to rise without having growing negative impacts upon a variety of economic activities in northern BC.

Yours truly,



Jack Mussallem,
Mayor

JM/cc