



BC Ferry Commission
RPO Hillside
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info@bcferrycommission.com

Re: Opportunity for Public Comment on Ferry Commissions Preliminary Price Cap Decision

The Pender Island Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of our members and all island residents, is expressing grave concern about the excessive price caps being introduced by the BC Ferry Corporation in conjunction with the Commission. Travelers to the Southern Gulf Islands have experienced a 60% fare increase since the Coastal Ferry Act was introduced in 2003. This is not in line with CPI increases of 10% in the same time period which is the standard rule of inflation.

We are opposed to ANY fare increases without the implementation of at least the 50% government subsidy that was approved for the Gulf Islands routes prior to 2003. The ferries plying our coastal waters constitute our highway. We have seen the negative effect of past rate increases on the many small businesses on all the Southern Gulf Islands. Furthermore, our full-time residents deserve fair treatment in determining the cost of transportation to and from their homes and places of work.

"The burden of high tariffs imposed so far, and the uncertain and feared expectations of what might lie ahead is eroding the stability and sustainability of coastal communities" (Community Impacts of Escalating Ferry Fares, November 17, 2010 Ferry Advisory Committee Memo).

We are greatly opposed to the elimination of Route 9 which BC Ferries have stated will be forthcoming if subsidies are not increased.

Included with this letter is the letter we sent to Premier Christy Clark, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Blair Lekstrom, and his response. It is our hope that you can offer relief to the Southern Gulf Islands in the matter of fare costs and the proposed elimination of Route 9.

Respectfully submitted,

BC Ferries Committee
PENDER ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Local businesses working together to support and promote each other and Pender Island

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Dear Commissioners:

As residents of Pender Island, we feel that that the proposed fare increase on minor routes are unfair and will create significant economic distress to residents, young families and businesses on the small islands. The fares are also discriminatory to the residents who rely on the minor routes for travel to Vancouver Island or the mainland to receive the services that are not available on the islands such as Doctors and all other medical purposes. The latest ferry increase is already having a significant financial impact on families who support their children's participation in off-island sports and educational activities.

We pay all appropriate taxes to the federal, provincial and municipal bodies, the same taxes paid by other BC residents regardless of their location however we do not receive the same tax benefit related to the provision of transportation infrastructure. The current and proposed ferry increases are equivalent to the sudden introduction of tolls on local highways throughout BC.

The provincial support for BC Ferries has not been increased since moving to the 'privatized' model. This funding level and model are not working. BC Ferries is not a cruise line that relies on tourism and marketing; it is an integral part of BC's transportation infrastructure and must be funded as such.

We realize there is a price to be paid to live on the gulf islands but the proposed fare increases are much beyond reasonable. Do you think this is fair? We do not and request a review of the current BC Ferries model, an increase in the provincial component of the BC Ferries budget and future limits to fare increases to annual cost of living increases.

Pender Island, BC
VON 2M2
