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Powell River BC V8A 5P4

8 August 2011

Mr. Gord Macatee, Commissioner
BC Ferry Commission
RPO Box Hillside Box 35119
VICTORIA, B.C. V8T 5G2

Dear Commissioner Macatee:

Tourism Powell River is writing in support of the proposed review and changes to the Coastal Ferry Act.

Tourism plays a significant role as one of Powell River's largest economic contributors. As a sustainable growth industry, Tourism will only become a larger player in the economy as the traditional industries that sustain our community continue to shrink. However, due to rising ferry fares, regular inconveniences, and breakdowns of the three ferries which service the Powell River region, our tourism industry is suffering and will only continue to do so if the Coastal Ferry Act is not scrapped or amended.

We need changes to our ferry system—that is a fact. Our residents, for whom the ferries are an essential part of life, require a reliable and affordable transportation system to see health care specialists, conduct business, and visit family. Additionally, though, our tourism industry demands a change in the ferry system. Working with tourists every day, we receive countless complaints over high fares. Fares cannot continue to rise as proposed—many travelers are already changing their plans based upon unreasonable fares. This says nothing of the inconveniences of the ferries, including breakdowns, missed sailings, and broken elevators. As Tourism professionals, our focus is creating memorable and stress-free travel experiences for visitors. It is so easy for one bad experience on the ferries to offset all of our efforts.

Tourism Powell River supports the movement to amend the Coastal Ferry Act to aid our community members, visiting tourists, and overall economy.

Sincerely,

Russell Brewer on behalf of Tourism Powell River
Director, Tourism Powell River