



Islands Trust

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February 12, 2016

File No.: 0420-20

Via e-mail: [Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)

The Honourable Todd Stone, MLA  
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
PO Box 9850, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Stone:

**Re: Request for support for changes to BC Ferries' schedules**

Minister Stone, thank you again for meeting with members of the Islands Trust Executive Committee on September 24, 2015 to discuss BC Ferries. As a follow-up to our September meeting, the Islands Trust Executive Committee wrote to the four ferry advisory councils in the Trust Area represent routes with service cuts in 2015.

The ferry advisory councils provided suggestions for scheduling changes that would benefit their islands and mitigate the impacts of the service cuts. I have attached their suggestions and hope the Province can be an advocate for some or all of these changes to BC Ferries scheduling. We also heard that the Bowen Island Ferry Advisory Council requires more financial information from BC Ferries in order to prepare a business case to support requests to reinstate runs.

Thank you for considering this information. We would be pleased to welcome you to the Gulf Islands this summer to showcase innovative transportation solutions developed by our island communities.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Peter Luckham  
Chair, Islands Trust Council  
[pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Attach: Ferry Advisory Committee suggestions for changes to ferry schedules

cc: Islands Trust Area MLAs

Coastal Regional District Chairs Group c/o Powell River Regional District Director Colin Palmer  
Bowen Island Ferry Advisory Committee  
Chemainus - Thetis Island - Penelakut Island Ferry Advisory Committee  
Denman Island - Hornby Island Ferry Advisory Committee  
Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee  
BC Ferries  
Bowen Island Municipal Council  
Islands Trust Council  
Islands Trust website

Preserving **Island** communities, culture and environment

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis

Islands Trust January 2016 compilation of ferry schedule change suggestions from:

Bowen Island Ferry Advisory Committee  
 Denman Island - Hornby Island Ferry Advisory Committee  
 Gabriola Island Ferry Advisory Committee  
 Chemainus - Thetis Island - Penelakut Island Ferry Advisory Committee

Ferry Advisory Committee	FAC Suggestion	FAC Rationale
Bowen Island	Restore the 9:30 a.m. Sunday sailing and the 7:30a.m. Saturday sailing, or as an alternative second choice, spread the morning schedule to create shorter gaps in the early morning to mitigate the impact of the lost sailings.	<p>The weekend morning cuts have resulted in social impacts that include children no longer participating in off-island activities as they now need to be on a 6:30 a.m. ferry for 9:00 a.m. activities, and shift/weekend workers now needing to spend the night off-island.</p> <p>It has also resulted in inconvenience for people who want reasonable travel connections to the airport or to weekend morning events such as church services.</p>
	As a second priority, add a later evening service from Horseshoe Bay, especially on Friday and Saturday nights.	A late Friday and Saturday night sailing would provide Bowen Island residents more access to evening work functions, theatre performances or movies.
Denman Island - Hornby Island	Extend the peak season length so that it is from the May long weekend to Thanksgiving.	<p>This extended peak season length would reflect the length of the tourist season.</p> <p>It would support the local Destination BC-funded tourism development efforts.</p>
	Add one additional sailing to Denman Island and Hornby Island to eliminate a two-hour gap in the middle of the day for both islands.	<p>The two-hour gap in the middle of the day causes problems for businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ missing a mid-day ferry now means small businesses incur significant costs</li> <li>○ delivery businesses can no longer make two deliveries in one day.</li> </ul> <p>Denman Island elementary student now attend fewer inter-school sport competitions on Vancouver Island as the current schedule results in too much missed instruction time and results in young students having to wait around at Vancouver Islands schools for hours in advance of competitions.</p>
Gabriola Island	As a pilot project, offer an across-the-board discount of 25% in the evenings and on weekends at times when there is spare capacity	<p>A discount on select Route 19 runs would provide a significant boost to both ridership and route revenue</p> <p>The rate of traffic recovery on Route 19 remains substantially lower than has been achieved on</p>

	available.	most other routes.
	Reintroduce weekend sailings (at 1:50 p.m. from Gabriola Island and 2:25 p.m. from Nanaimo)	<p>The FAC's analysis suggests that reintroduction of one additional round trip on Saturdays and Sundays would provide a significant boost to both ridership and route revenue, without impacting on the delivery of the government's \$400,000 net savings target.</p> <p>The 2.5 hour gap in the early afternoon weekend service is a major contributor to the problem of slow recovery of lost tourist and local traffic on Route 9. In December 2015 the Gabriola FAC provided BC Ferries with an outline business case for this proposal and they are presently awaiting their response.</p> <p>The 2.5 hours gap not only deters tourist traffic, but also restricts the ability of Gabriola residents to make trips into Nanaimo without committing a whole day. Gabriola Island does not have a medical clinic open on weekends, resulting in more frequent ambulance transfers being required to and from Nanaimo. The mid-day break in service results in ambulance service delays.</p>
Chemainus - Thetis Island - Penelakut Island	Reduce the dangerous cargo runs in the summer months to mirror the rest of the year (every second week)	This change would allow more passengers and vehicle traffic during those busy months.
	Reinstate the late Friday night sailing during May through September	A late Friday night sailing would provide Thetis Island residents more access to Vancouver Island entertainment.