



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **COASTAL REGIONAL DISTRICTS JOIN TOGETHER TO EXPRESS CONCERN WITH BC FERRY SERVICE DURING MEETING WITH MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Powell River, British Columbia, July 26, 2011** – The Chairs of nine coastal Regional Districts met with Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, on July 19<sup>th</sup> to give voice to the adverse impact of BC Ferry Corporation fare increases and to encourage the Minister to initiate a major revision of the Coastal Ferry Act.

The meeting was organized by Colin Palmer, Chair of the Powell River Regional District, and included Regional District Chairs and Vice Chairs from Metro Vancouver to Victoria to Bella Coola. Together, this group of diverse Regional Districts represents 2.9 million British Columbians or 63% of the provincial population.

“It is significant to see nine diverse Regional Districts come together with a clear message for the Province: improve coastal ferry service in BC,” said Colin Palmer, Chair of the Powell River Regional District. “We know that fares have been escalating since the BC Coastal Ferry Act was put in place in 2003. We also know that families and businesses in each of our regions—from those on small islands to those in the Metro Vancouver and Victoria areas—are being impacted by increases. We need to ensure that coastal British Columbian families and businesses can survive. As a group, our collective intent is to support the Minister in consideration of all options to improve coastal ferry service.”

The coastal Regional District Chairs advised the Minister that the original objectives of the Coastal Ferry Act have not been met. The group presented evidence of the ways in which increasing fares are damaging island and coastal communities and asked the Province to develop more appropriate oversight tools for the delivery of coastal ferry services. Members of the group also presented the concept that ferry service could be considered an extension of highway service, which could require that it be treated and funded in the same manner as non-marine infrastructure.

“We are confident that the Minister understands the importance of this issue and is convinced that fare increases cannot continue as planned” said Lois Jackson, Chair of Metro Vancouver. The nine coastal Chairs will request meetings with the BC Ferry Commissioner and the Premier, and have offered to continue to be part of the essential improvements to the coastal ferry service in British Columbia.

Participating coastal Regional District Chairs include the following:

Jim Abram, Vice –Chair, Strathcona Regional District

Christine Hyde, Chair, Central Coast Regional District  
Lois Jackson, Chair, Metro Vancouver  
Sheila Malcolmson, Islands Trust Council  
Gary Nohr, Chair, Sunshine Coast Regional District  
Colin Palmer, Chair, Powell River Regional District  
Joe Stanhope, Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo  
Glen Wong, Chair, Alberni-Clayquot Regional District  
Geoff Young, Chair, Capital Regional District

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