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September 23, 2026

File No.: 11-5595-30-BC Ferries-10

Via email: mark.carney@parl.gc.ca; Steven.MacKinnon@parl.gc.ca; francois-philippe.champagne@parl.gc.ca

The Right Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Steve MacKinnon
Minister of Transport

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne
Minister of Finance and National Revenue

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers:

Re: Support for Motion M-35 – Fair and Sustainable Federal Operational Funding for BC Ferries

I am writing on behalf of Islands Trust Council to express our support for Motion M-35 and to urge the Government of Canada to modernize its approach to federal ferry funding and establish fair, stable, long-term operational funding for BC Ferries.

For communities throughout the Islands Trust Area, ferry services are not simply a transportation option. They are essential connections to employment, health care, education, essential goods and services, family and community networks, and economic opportunities. Reliable and affordable ferry service is fundamental to the resilience of island communities and to the local businesses and economies that depend upon them.

Islands Trust is a special-purpose government representing over 30,000 residents and approximately 10,000 non-resident property owners within the Islands Trust Area. Its legislated mandate is to preserve and protect the Islands Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of present and future generations. We recognize that healthy ecosystems, resilient communities and sustainable economies are interdependent, and that reliable transportation is an important part of community resilience.

The circumstances facing coastal British Columbia have changes substantially since the federal funding arrangements were established. Motion M-35 notes that BC Ferries received approximately

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\$1.63 in federal operational support per passenger in 2024-25, compared with approximately \$291 per passenger for federally supported East Coast ferry systems. The motion also recognizes that existing federal funding arrangements are based on formulas and constitutional arrangements established decades ago, when Vancouver Island and the islands in the Trust Area had roughly half their current populations.

This disparity is particularly significant for island communities, where residents, businesses and visitors have no practical alternative to marine transportation. Ferry costs affect the cost of living, workforce mobility, access to services, local businesses and tourism, while service disruptions can have disproportionate impacts on communities with limited transportation options.

We are also mindful that BC Ferries is entering the next Performance Term process, which will establish the framework for fares, service levels, capital investment and operating requirements for the coming years. BC Ferries has identified significant financial pressures associated with operating costs, aging infrastructure, fleet renewal and growing demand, and has indicated that without a sustainable long-term funding model, customers could face substantial fare increases.

Islands Trust Council supports the intent of Motion-35 and its call for the Government of Canada to recognize BC Ferries as essential national transportation infrastructure and to establish a fair, stable and sustainable federal operational funding framework. We encourage the Government of Canada to work with the Province of British Columbia, BC Ferries, First Nations and coastal/island communities to develop a long-term approach that supports affordable fares, reliable service and the resilience of ferry-dependent communities.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to continued collaboration among all levels of government to ensure that coastal British Columbians have access to safe, reliable, and affordable marine transportation.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Patrick', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Laura Patrick
Chair, Islands Trust Council

cc: Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Members of Parliament for the Islands Trust Area
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Islands Trust Council

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