**May 9, 2025**
**Subject: Routes 21 and 22 – Request for Equitable and Functional Ferry Service**

Dear Nicolas,

Thank you for your April 2 response to our March 6 letter on behalf of the Hornby Ferry Action Discussion Group. We appreciate the time and care taken to address our concerns and to outline the broader operational and financial challenges BC Ferries is managing.

We would like to acknowledge your comments regarding staff safety and the decision to modify the “Let’s Connect” engagement session. While we understand the need for caution in light of past incidents, we want to reaffirm the importance of in-person dialogue with communities whose lives are deeply affected by ferry service. In future, we hope efforts can be made to ensure such sessions proceed in-person as planned, with appropriate safety measures in place.

Your response referenced the investment made through the deployment of the Quinitsa on Route 22 and the addition of the Kahloke to Route 21 during peak months. While both steps were appreciated, we are concerned that they are being presented as long-term solutions to what are ongoing, year-round capacity issues. These actions—though helpful—have not addressed the core problem: both Hornby and Denman Islands remain significantly underserved.

The attached document outlines the historical vessel capacity timeline on these routes. Despite significant population growth and increased vehicle traffic over the past five decades, service has stagnated or declined. The Baynes Sound Connector has slower turnaround times than its predecessor and cannot meet peak demand when both Hornby and Denman rely on Route 21. Its inability to perform two round trips per hour, combined with about the same vehicle capacity, leaves our communities with objectively less service than was available in the late 1970s.

**Service is not just a matter of schedule frequency; it is a function of vessel speed and vehicle-carrying capacity.** The reduction in Kahloke’s rated capacity—due to regulatory changes from Transport Canada—further underscores the urgent need for replacement or supplemental vessels that can meet demand.

While B.C.F. heat maps may show that the Baynes Sound Connector is able to meet demand in some off-peak periods, it does not solve the problem during primary-demand times when Hornby traffic is funneled onto Route 21. In fact, Route 21—serving from 6:40 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m.—must absorb a dramatic spike in demand between 8:00 a.m. and 6:15 p.m. when Hornby service is operating. Continued limited summer tandem service does little to relieve this year-round strain.

We understand that the Kahloke is scheduled for refit in October 2025 and will continue to be used until its retirement. We also appreciate the information shared about the redeployment of Island Class vessels beginning in 2027 and the longer-term plan to place the Quinitsa permanently on Route 22. However, **2027 is simply too far away to wait for relief.**

In light of the above, and while recognizing the fiscal pressures you described, we respectfully request the following immediate and near-term actions:

* **Route 21 requires greater capacity during Hornby’s operational hours.**
If a larger-capacity vessel is not feasible in the short term, then tandem service with a second vessel must be expanded significantly into the shoulder seasons and weekends—not limited to summer weekdays. This is the only way to mitigate the bottleneck created when both islands depend on a single ferry.
* **Clarification is requested regarding possible modifications to the cable ferry.**
We’ve heard that BC Ferries may be exploring options to increase vehicle capacity singularly on the Baynes Sound Connector, such as widening the vessel. Could you please confirm whether this is under serious consideration?
* **Route 22 needs a winter service contingency plan.**
The Quinitsa is vulnerable during winter storms and your letter informed that the *Kahloke* is scheduled to go into refit in October 2025. Reliable backup service must be in place during winter “weather” to avoid disruption to an essential public service.
* **In fairness, Routes 21 and 22 should be prioritized for future capital investment.**
We acknowledge the immense challenge of managing an aging fleet across the system. However, these two routes have seen decades of underinvestment. As you plan for vessel replacements, we urge that Hornby and Denman be treated as urgent priorities—not deferred, repeatedly, until after more visible routes are addressed.

Our ferry-dependent communities rely on these services for every aspect of daily life, from healthcare and employment to food supply and education. Current service levels are inadequate and inequitable when compared with other minor routes.

We support your efforts to improve service across the network and understand that coordination with provincial decision-makers is critical. To that end, we are copying our MLA and other key contacts to ensure the issues affecting Hornby and Denman remain visible and urgent.

We look forward to your response—and to a clear, time-bound, plan of action that addresses both Routes 21 and 22 in a meaningful way.

Sincerely,
**Karen Ross**
Hornby Ferry Action Discussion Group

**Cc:**

* MLA Osborne
* Ms. Trevena, Mid-Island BC Ferries Board Representative
* Eva Hage, BC Ferries Commissioner
* Francois Bertrand, Executive Director, MOTI Marine Branch

**Bcc:** Hornby Ferry Action Discussion Group