To Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation

Cc: Josie Osborne, M.L.A.

 Marc Tremblay, B.C. Ferries Authority Board Central Island Rep.

 Jill Sharland, CEO BCF

From: Friends and Residents of Hornby Island

August/22

Hornby and Denman Islands are ferry dependent communities, relying on access to the rest of B.C.by service provided by B.C. Ferries. (Routes 22 and 21 respectively)

The Hornby Island reality: It is no longer possible to reliably get anywhere on time – impacting employment, keeping appointments, connecting with flights and ferry reservations, making or receiving deliveries, providing or accessing services, fractured supply chain as companies refuse to deliver to Hornby during the summer, inflationary impact as companies that still do deliveries pass on wait times to the end consumers, childrens’ off island school activities being missed, etc. Also, as an Island reliant on Tourism, we are acutely aware of the access delays impacting thousands of British Columbians heading to Hornby for their annual vacations.

Exacerbating the situation. The 49 year-old, 21 car capacity, current ferry (the Kahloke) is no longer the vessel it was. In November, 2021, Transport Canada required a light ship survey. The result of that safety review was that the weight carrying capacity of the Kahloke was downgraded. Meaning, commercial vehicle weights are impacting the number and weight of vehicles being carried. Literally, the ferry leaves with empty deck space when the newly imposed weight limit is reached. The worst performing route in the fleet actually got worse!

**Reason #1 to take action on behalf of Route 22 during PT6 negotiations**: In the Coastal Ferry Services Contract the 49 year-old Kahloke is described as having a capacity of 21 vehicles. This is NOT always the case due to the 2021 weight carrying capacity **downgrade.**

**Reason #2 to take action on behalf of Route 22 during PT 6 negotiations:** The terminal on Hornby Island only has a marshalling area for 17 vehicles. After that traffic lines up on the main, narrow, two lane country road, past businesses and residences, sometimes for miles. People waiting in line have no proximity access to bathrooms, water or refreshments, and no where to get into some shade.

**Reason # 3 to take action on behalf of Route 22, during PT 6 negotiations:**  B.C. Ferries performance metrics, in terms of utilization and overloads, show the Hornby route to be the worst performing route in the entire minor route fleet. And this is not new.
In a letter written five years ago, from the Hornby Denman FAC: *“We note that in July and August* ***2017****, Route 22* (Hornby Island) *had the highest capacity utilization of any BC Ferries’ route: 99% and 102%. Route 22 also had the highest percentage of overloads of any route: 14.9% (up from 9.2% in the previous year).”*
**Reason #4 to take action on behalf of Route 22, during PT 6 negotiations**: B.C.F. has abdicated their responsibility in long-term planning to address the situation on Hornby Island. In the last convened Hornby Denman FAC meeting, (February 23, 2022) BCF’s representatives advised that a new vessel for the Hornby route is currently scheduled for 2035.

The earliest relief of any sort, currently outlined in their planning, is a relief vessel for the summer months, in 2026. (meaning if the relief vessel is needed elsewhere, the smaller vessel would be returned to service).

**Reason #5 to take action on behalf of Route 22, during PT 6 negotiations:** Citizens of Hornby must take two ferries to get to Vancouver Island.

Traffic to/from Hornby is also dependent on Route 21, which also has dismal performance metrics.

Route 21 (Denman Island to Buckley Bay/Vancouver Island) is the second ferry on the journey. The Route 22 and Route 21 interlock in two ways – traffic moving west-east and traffic moving east-west.

With respect to west-east traffic:

A larger-capacity ferry on Route 22 would move traffic faster off of Denman Island on to Hornby Island. It would reduce the often horrendously long journey from Vancouver Island to Hornby Island by cutting down the waiting at Gravelly Bay.(the terminal on Denman Island from which traffic departs to Hornby Island).

With respect to east-west traffic:

Our communities believe increased capacity on Route 21 is also crucial to keep the traffic moving through to Vancouver Island.

However, for the time being, the Hornby priority is a larger Hornby ferry. It would at least be moving traffic from the Shingle Spit terminal, which only has parking for 17 AEQs, (**AEQ** is a measure of deck space which was deemed to be the equivalent of one car length) to Denman West, (the shared terminal, marshalling Hornby and Denman traffic going to Vancouver Island). Denman West terminal has been expanded, it can accommodate parking for 108 AEQs (51 at the terminal plus 57 in the established waiting lane).

To be clear, we are advocating for improved capacity on both Routes 21 and 22.

With respect to increased capacity on Route 21. This route is served by the cable ferry, a “one-off” in the fleet. BCF has consistently stated that the deck space on this barge can be increased by 50%. If so, this needs to happen immediately.

When the cable ferry was approved:

*In his decision to approve the cable ferry, the Commissioner stated:
"The Application indicates that the cable ferry capacity will be sufficient to meet the most optimistic range of the traffic projection. If traffic growth proves to be higher than the most optimistic projections BC Ferries has stated that it could add capacity with more sailings, increase the licensed capacity of the vessel to accommodate more passengers, consider lengthening of the cable ferry and/or supplement cable ferry service with a passenger only ferry."*
BC Ferries clearly got things wrong! Even with the limited added capacity of “more sailings”, the Baynes Sound Connector is not coming close to being able to move peak summer traffic in a timely way.

How long are our communities going to pay the price for bad management decisions?

**Reason #6 to take action on behalf of Routes 21 and 22 during PT6 negotiations:** The Baynes Sound Connector is proven to be providing inadequate service. Increasing the deck space or adding a supplementary vessel at peak times, are the two top solutions being suggested. Whether a permanent, temporary supplemental vessel would need classifying as an additional route needs to be addressed in this round of contract negotiations.

There are other solutions. For instance, adding extra early morning and later evening sailings from Shingle Spit, to connect with the extended schedule at Denman West, Or adding another vessel to go directly from Vancouver Island to Hornby Island.

Unfortunately, the local FAC have provided potential solutions for years, to no avail. We are optimistic that a new direction at B.C. Ferries will be more responsive to addressing these long standing problems for our communities.

# **Reason #7 to take action on behalf of Route 22 during PT 6 negotiations**: Over 2000 concerned citizens signed the petitions asking BCF to: **Immediately Upgrade Hornby Ferry (Route 22) to a Newer Vessel With Serviceable Capacity**

Thank you very much for your concerns, and attention to finding solutions for our community.

Respectfully,

2000 signators, (1600+ online at: <https://chng.it/ZhsjwnGYS9> )

Per: Karen Ross

Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation