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| |  | | --- | | **From:** [**Heather.Raines@bcferries.com**](mailto:Heather.Raines@bcferries.com)  **Executive Assistant to Nicolas Jimenez**  **Jimenez, Nicolas** | | Wed, Apr 2, 2025, |  |  |
| |  | | --- | | to Brian, Morningstar, Customer, Karen, Nicolas | | | |

Dear Ms. Ross,

Thank you for your March 6, 2025 email on behalf of the members of the Hornby Ferry Action Discussion Group.

First, I’d like to address your concerns regarding the BC Ferries “Let’s Connect engagement pop-up” session. To be very clear, safety of our staff is a top priority, and online threats against anyone are not tolerated. Following a number of unfortunate incidents occurring in community, we ensure there are safety plans created in advance of venturing out, and we work to create a space where our staff are safe.

I understand our team worked with you to ensure the community knew the reason for the visit – to discuss how BC Ferries can hear from more people, in more ways – and it is unfortunate that the pop-up was shifted to speaking with folks riding the ferries and to providing online feedback. The benefit of having the online options in this case, is people still had opportunities to contribute to the conversation and to have their feedback included. In fact, Amy mentioned that the team had a chance to connect with over 60 people that day, not including any online submissions.

I want to acknowledge that your community’s voices are heard. In summer 2023, we implemented significant service enhancements to support seasonal challenges by adding the *Quinitsa* from May to December and introduced two-ship service on the Buckley Bay–Denman Island route from June to September.

We recently met with MLA Osbourne to discuss our current fiscal reality, our commitment to safety and how we can work together to navigate some of the challenges facing rural communities. We also discussed our commitment to community engagement, and making sure there are ongoing opportunities for elected officials, businesses, and community members to engage with us.

BC Ferries works hard to provide safe, effective service throughout coastal communities and we will continue to listen, while also making sure we continue to work within the budget and [BC Ferries Coastal Services contract](https://www.bcferries.com/web_image/h54/h97/8995216359454.pdf), as determined by our with the Province of British Columbia.

As an essential public service, it’s our job to keep people moving safely and reliably. We have to make decisions that work within our budget, which for us means focusing on the maintenance and continued reliability of our infrastructure and planning for the delivery of vessels and supporting infrastructure to replace our aging fleet.

For example, after nearly 200 days out of service, the 60-year-old Queen of New Westminster is back on one of our major routes. The unplanned repairs totaled $5.5 million, on top of scheduled refit costs, and resulted in an estimated $8.5 million in lost revenue. The Queen of New Westminster, Queen of Oak Bay, and Queen of Surrey were all built in the 1960s and 1980s, meaning their maintenance now requires more time, specialized parts with long lead times, and meticulous inspections to ensure ongoing safety and reliability.

I’ve shared a few examples to underscore the current challenges we are facing, and to say in no uncertain terms that we intend to continue the use of the *Kahloke* as the supplemental vessel during peak season between Buckley Bay - Denman Island until its retirement. This vessel is safe and fit to navigate the seas. When it reaches retirement, we will look to deploy another relief vessel to provide additional seasonal service. The *Kahloke* is scheduled to go into refit in October 2025, where it will receive upgrades to further increase the vessel’s reliability.

The *Kahloke*’s maximum carrying capacity was reduced through a Transport Canada regulatory process. Similar to other vessels in the fleet, the vessel’s unloaded weight has increased over the years, due primarily to an accumulation of paint and coatings. The vessel still carries a full complement of passenger vehicles and BC Ferries staff work hard to ensure customers can travel as safely, quickly and efficiently as possible. During the off-peak season, the *Baynes Sound Connector* will continue to provide service, shuttling when demand warrants. Again, this vessel is safe and fit to navigate the seas.

On our Denman Island - Hornby Island route, the plan is to deploy the *Quinitsa* during the upcoming peak season and in 2026. In 2027, it is expected to become the primary vessel on this route. While an Island Class vessel isn’t set to serve Denman or Hornby Islands in the near future, the introduction of four new Island Class vessels beginning by 2027 will allow for ship redeployment across several routes that will ultimately allow the *Quinitsa* to operate between Denman and Hornby year-round, doubling the current ship’s capacity.

We appreciate your input both in years past with our FAC, and now on behalf of Hornby Ferry Action Discussion Group.

Nicolas Jimenez (he/him)

President and Chief Executive Officer

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BC Ferries acknowledges and respects the territories of Indigenous peoples on whose beautiful lands and waters our ships, offices, terminals, and work sites operate along the Pacific West Coast.