



*Hornby Island Residents' and Ratepayers' Association*  
P.O. Box 16, Hornby Island B.C. V0R 1Z0

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March 17, 2014

Honourable Todd Stone  
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure  
Government of B.C.  
Legislative Buildings  
Victoria, B.C.

by email & Canada Post

Dear Minister Stone:

At the Annual General Meeting of the Hornby Island Residents' and Ratepayers' Association on March 12/2014, the collective membership voted unanimously to send you a letter expressing the extreme concern of this Community over planned cuts to Hornby Island's Friday night ferry sailings. And with just cause. Unlike most Islands of Hornby's population size, we only have one day per week when we have sailings after 6:00 PM (by way of comparison, Denman Island next door to us, with a similar population, has late night sailings 7 days per week). This means we have one day per week when residents and businesses have an extended day for participation in cultural & education related activities (including extracurricular school events), deliveries of goods and services, and medical appointments (particularly important for appointments in Nanaimo).

And, the proposed Friday night cuts are all the more grievous when you consider how we got this way. Approximately 23 years ago, Hornby Island voluntarily accepted a reduced level of ferry service compared to other Islands with a similar population (e.g. Denman Island as cited above). We accepted a schedule that allowed our route (route 22) to operate with a single shift of ferry workers. They cover our regular sailings 7 days per week with 1 day shift, and man late night Friday sailings with overtime. This gave us a lean service model compared to other Islands of our size, which primarily operated with a system of 2 work shifts per day, seven days per week (which also provided them with multiple late night sailings). Not inconsequentially, Hornby's service model has saved the Province a great deal of money over its 23 year span.

However, we now find that our past adoption of this cost-efficient service model is working against us. I'll explain. In the recently-developed plan for ferry service cuts, there didn't seem to be any recognition of Hornby's already reduced service. And, because we operate with only a single-shift system, there's no flexibility. Our Community's Ferry Advisory Committee recently met with BC Ferries representatives to come up with alternate reductions to our service. We proposed a number of mid-day and weekend sailing cuts in return for Friday evenings, but our efficient one shift service model, combined with requirements in the ferry workers' Collective Agreement, made this impossible.

How important are our Friday evening sailings? The last sentence of paragraph 1 explains some of the general importance to our Island residents, but it goes far beyond that. Tourism, and its many spin-offs, is **the** major industry on Hornby Island. During the ten month period affected by the proposed service cuts (September 1st through May 31st), the only way our tourists from the Victoria and Vancouver areas can come for weekends, is if there is late Friday evening ferry service. If our Friday evening service ends at 7:00PM as presently planned, weekend tourism here will virtually dry up, with devastating consequences for our economy. Unfortunately, this isn't hyperbole. It's what our business sector is telling us loudly and clearly.

Hornby Island already made significant service cuts 23 years ago, and these cuts left us with a service level already less than what most comparable Islands will have after the current round of planned cuts. For this reason, we're convinced that any fair analysis of the situation would leave our existing service intact.

However, if the Province still feels otherwise, we have a compromise to offer. If we can have only 1 of our later Friday evening sailings restored (Denman to Hornby at 10:05 PM), we may be able to manage. This seems like a reasonable request, given that it represents a concession of only 9% of the total planned cuts here.

To conclude, it's impossible to overstate the importance of this request to our Island and its future, and in light of this, we ask for a meeting with Minister Stone to explain things thoroughly and answer any questions he may have.

Respectfully awaiting your reply,

The HIRRA Executive,

Lynn Nunley, Daniel Siegel, Carol Quin and Rob McCreary.

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