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July 23, 2025

File: 0400-20

The Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
Via email: TT.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Farnworth:

RE: REQUEST TO HOME PORT ISLAND CLASS VESSELS AT CROFTON AND VESUVIUS

On behalf of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board, I write to express our continued interest and concern regarding BC Ferries' decision to home port both Island Class vessels, planned for deployment in 2027, on the Vesuvius-Crofton route at Crofton.

The CRD Board recently sent a letter to BC Ferries President and CEO, Nicolas Jimenez, advocating for a dual home-porting model, with one vessel berthed at Vesuvius and the other at Crofton at night. This approach, which is used successfully on the Gabriola-Nanaimo route, would help mitigate potential employment and income impacts for Salt Spring Island (SSI) based crew members and their families.

In response, BC Ferries advised through a customer relations advisor that the decision has been made to berth both vessels at Crofton to support crew recruitment and retention. For your information, we are enclosing both the CRD's letter and the response received from BC Ferries.

Although we appreciate the operational considerations, the CRD Board remains concerned about the broader community impacts of this decision. With all three SSI terminals currently serving as homeports, the proposed plan could reduce the local workforce and jeopardize the island's future viability as a homeport location. BC Ferries' plan to home port both vessels at Crofton has generated considerable concern within the SSI community and the plan does not adequately consider the impact on affected employees and the community's rural character by ending the longstanding practice of homeporting a vessel at Vesuvius Bay.

Of particular concern is the lack of engagement given that the plan was announced after the dissolution of the local Ferry Advisory Committees. While BC Ferries has engaged with local government and the community in the Crofton area about planned changes to route 6 and the Crofton terminal, there has been limited consultation to date with SSI residents and local government representatives. The CRD Board believes that meaningful engagement with both sides of the route is essential to ensuring community impacts are fully understood and considered. The fact that BC Ferries is already actively recruiting for Crofton based staffing positions highlights the urgency of the situation and the importance of carefully considering the local employment impacts.

The CRD will be submitting a request to meet with Ministry of Transportation and Transit staff during the upcoming Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Convention to further explore the implications of BC Ferries' decision and to discuss potential alternatives that would reflect a more community-minded approach.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this matter further with you or your staff before UBCM to ensure that local concerns are fully considered.

Sincerely,



Cliff McNeil-Smith
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

Attachments

cc: CRD Board
Peter Lantin, Chair, BC Ferry Authority Board
Joy MacPhail, Chair, BC Ferries Board
Ted Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD





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June 17, 2025

File: 0400-20

BC Ferries
Suite 500, 1321 Blanshard Street
Victoria BC V8W 0B7
Via email: Nicolas.jimenez@bcferries.com

Attention: Nicolas Jimenez, President and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Nicolas Jimenez:

RE: REQUEST TO HOME PORT ISLAND CLASS VESSELS AT CROFTON AND VESUVIUS

I write on behalf of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board to respectfully urge BC Ferries to reconsider its current proposal to berth both Island Class vessels, planned for deployment on the Vesuvius–Crofton route in 2027, exclusively at Crofton. Instead, the CRD Board encourages BC Ferries to adopt a dual home-porting model, with one vessel berthed at Crofton and the other at Vesuvius, mirroring the successful approach used on the Gabriola Island–Nanaimo Harbour route.

The public announcement of BC Ferries' intention to home port both vessels at Crofton has raised significant concern in the Salt Spring Island community. This proposal, if implemented, could result in job and income impacts for up to 30 Salt Spring Island-based staff and their families. BC Ferries' active recruitment for positions associated with these vessels further underscores the urgency of this issue and the need for thoughtful consideration of local employment consequences.

A dual home-porting arrangement would help preserve these local jobs, improve operational resilience, allow for better crew scheduling flexibility, and reduce unnecessary travel and environmental impacts associated with crew commutes. It would also demonstrate a continued commitment by BC Ferries to the communities it serves and the people who sustain its operations.

We appreciate BC Ferries' efforts to modernize its fleet and improve service reliability and ask that you give serious consideration to this request. Ensuring that one vessel is berthed at Vesuvius would help maintain meaningful employment opportunities on Salt Spring Island and reflect a more equitable and community-minded approach.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Cliff McNeil-Smith
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

cc: CRD Board
Ted Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD



July 7, 2025

Dear Cliff McNeil-Smith,

Thank you for writing to our President and CEO, Nicolas Jimenez, with your concerns regarding home porting Island Class vessels at Crofton terminal. He has asked that Customer Relations respond on his behalf.

When the two Island Class vessels go into service by 2027, both will be homeported in Crofton to improve crew recruitment and retention. This change will help address long-standing staffing issues on Salt Spring Island, where hiring and retention have been challenging, in part due to housing availability and affordability. Vancouver Island offers a larger recruitment pool and greater housing availability, making it easier to attract and retain crew.

We recognize the impact moving the home port may have on employees living on Salt Spring, and on the island community. All existing crew on Salt Spring will have job opportunities, and additional positions were posted in spring 2025, providing time for staff hiring and transitions by 2027 when new vessels are in place. BC Ferries is working closely with employees and the union to ensure a smooth transition. We have seen a number of employees already accept jobs where they will commute to Crofton to start their day.

We will continue to collaborate and engage with interested and impacted groups to ensure impacts to neighbourhoods are minimized as much as possible, while maintaining safe and reliable ferry service.

We value your feedback and thank you for taking the time to share it. We look forward to serving Salt Spring Island with two ship service.

Kind regards,

Lisa Dondale
Advisor, Customer Relations
Customer Care

British Columbia Ferry Services Inc.

Suite 500 – 1321 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 0B7

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