

BY EMAIL

July 8th, 2021

Honourable Rob Fleming
Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure

Honourable Bowinn Ma
Minister of State for Infrastructure

Dear Ministers,

Given the Sunshine Coast's unique geography and water-only access, transportation is particularly important to the well being of business and our entire Sunshine Coast community.

Both our highway (and this terminology is generous) and our dependence on BC Ferries are at the core of everything we do – from recovering from the pandemic to reducing our carbon footprint to improving our standard of living for everyone on the Coast.

We believe some of the solutions to the challenges we face are matters that your government can and needs to address now. In the interests of brevity, we highlight just a few:

1. The two lane road serving as our arterial connection is undersized to handle our current traffic, let alone future demands resulting from our rapid growth in population. Lines of cars that were once associated with "ferry traffic" have now become the norm. This has, sadly, resulted in increasing numbers of accidents and fatalities.

In addition, the bottlenecks along our single road creates situations where accidents can and have paralyzed the Sunshine Coast for hours. This was the case recently when a fatal crash caused the road to be closed for over 12 hours. This is far from a unique situation with numerous closures resulting from storms, accidents and road construction becoming commonplace.

Despite these realities, your Ministry appears to be trying to address these challenges with minor patches and amendments, many of which are proposed to be implemented over the next 15 years or more. This is unacceptable – we need a real highway and we need this to start now.

Sechelt & District Chamber of Commerce

Phone: +1 604 885-0662

PO Box 360, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0

www.SecheltChamber.bc.ca

exec@SecheltChamber.bc.ca

2. The Chamber has been a strong and vocal supporter of BC Ferries and done our best to identify opportunities for improvements to meet the needs of our members and our community. We understand the complexity of operating one of the world's largest ferry fleets and we are in regular contact with BC Ferries management about specific operational matters, as appropriate.

It is our view that the Province needs to do more – including supporting the calls for a second ferry on Route 3 from Langdale to Horseshoe Bay and providing the necessary amendments to the CFA and support with funding commitments to make this happen. While we need this vessel for our route for peak times of the year, the fact is that Ferries would also benefit from having an additional vessel to reduce the demands on their overall fleet. And recognizing that building such vessels can take years to build, we believe such decisions must be made now.

For our community, the demand on Route 3 is again resulting in extraordinary delays, late sailings, staff overtime and unhappy residents and tourist patrons alike.

Throughout the pandemic we have been the leader on the Coast in bringing elected officials and business leaders together. We appreciate the former Minister Trevena who joined us as has Minister Simons, and most recently BC Ferries CEO, Mark Collins.

Given the urgency of these issues to the wellbeing of the Sunshine Coast, we are pleased to invite both of you to visit us in Sechelt for our first post-pandemic face to face meeting. We would be pleased to work with your staff to find a time that will work for you, hopefully in late July.

Regards,

SECHELT & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Ed Pednaud

ED PEDNAUD
Executive Director

Cc: Honourable Nicholas Simons
Lori Pratt, Chair, Sunshine Coast Regional District
Darnelda Siegers, Mayor, District of Sechelt
Bill Beamish, Mayor, Town of Gibsons