



Friday, May 01, 2015

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BC Ferry Commission
PO Box 9279 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC, V8W 9J7

Sent Via email: info@bcferrycommission.ca

Re: Flexibility and Revenue Management Strategy

Dear Commission:

The Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce is pleased to learn of the plans to move forward with a revamp of the reservation system in place today.

Our position has long been that the Reservation System should be improved and expanded so as to require its use for almost all travel with BC Ferries. In fact, the model used by both Air Canada and Westjet are exactly what BC Ferries should be implementing. Key features that merit consideration are:

- Reservations mandatory except in rare situations of emergency or other 'one of' type events.
- Real time access for the public so that they can determine which sailing may be preferable to them.
- Varied rates on each route designed to encourage budget conscious travelers to reserve off-peak sailing.
- Flexibility to offer incentives for travel during times/dates that may typically be slower than usual.
- Group rate discounts, again similar to airlines, thus enabling sports teams, school groups etc. more flexibility to travel via BC Ferries.
- High use discounts where the public can build up frequent travel points thus encouraging even more use of the Ferry System.

We reiterate that today's system discourages, and in fact penalizes those people who plan ahead and ensure BC Ferries of a customer transaction. That system must be abolished. The Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce also wishes to encourage BC Ferries to consider additional changes designed to promote travel to/from the Islands of BC.

1. Refrain from further cuts to service; in fact we suggest a complete review of all cuts made thus far.
2. Encourage the use of smaller cars via either a discount, or a 'per foot' charge after a certain minimum criteria has been set.
3. Introduce a program that encourages the vacationing public to consider the Island Communities (or vice versa) via the 'per foot' rate. IE: It is cheaper today to bring 2 Ford F350's on board than it is to bring one that tows a small boat or camper. The latter option often would take less lineal feet and have less weight impact than the former.
We believe that this policy discourages travel on BC Ferries thus resulting in the loss of economic opportunities for Island Businesses.

We would also appreciate the opportunity to have a representative of BC Ferries speak at one of our Member Functions sometime in early 2015.

In conclusion we appreciate the opportunity to provide input on your Fare Flexibility and Digital Experience Plan. We believe that this is a positive step moving forward that will result in additional travel thus improving the economic health of all concerned.

Yours truly
ALBERNI VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Bill Collette
Executive Director