



BC FERRY & MARINE WORKERS' UNION

1511 Stewart Avenue
Nanaimo, BC V9S 4E3
250.716.3454 or 1.800.663.7009
250.716.3455 Facsimile

VIA EMAIL

Hon. Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
PO Box 9055 Prov Stn Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

July 16, 2025

Dear Minister Farnworth:

RE: ISLAND CLASS VESSELS AT BCFS

I'm writing to raise concerns about BC Ferries' decision to base both new Island Class vessels for Route 6 (Crofton – Vesuvius Bay) on Vancouver Island. These vessels will replace the *MV Quinsam*, which is currently based on Salt Spring Island.

The *Quinsam* has provided full-time work for 18 to 21 islanders who have delivered decades of reliable, safe, community-focused ferry service.

Together with local community groups we're calling for a fair compromise: base one of the new vessels in Crofton and one in Vesuvius Bay. This two-vessel model already works well between Gabriola Island and Vancouver Island.

BC Ferries says removing a full-time vessel from Salt Spring will help with recruitment and retention, citing housing, labour supply and commuting. But they haven't shared any data to back this up. What we do know is the change will add up to two hours of commuting for Salt Spring-based workers who are able to transfer. If they can't manage the change, some families may have to leave Salt Spring, a real loss for the community.

Taking vessel-based jobs off Salt Spring weakens local resilience. Ferries aren't just transportation; they're critical infrastructure in emergencies. Without a vessel and crew based on the island, response times for urgent medical and evacuation needs will go up while options go down.

This decision reflects a larger problem. The BC Ferries governance model is broken. The people who rely on the system every day have no real say, even though they fund it through fares and tax dollars. There's no clear oversight, no transparency, and no one held responsible when public needs are ignored.

BC Ferries has eliminated community advisory committees and continues to make major service decisions without meaningful input from the people most affected. Digital tools can support engagement, but they can't replace it. Filtering public input through online tools just means less transparency. Ferry-dependent communities deserve a real voice in these decisions.

mailroom@bcfmwu.com

Facebook and Twitter @bcfmwu.com

www.BCFMWU.com

AFFILIATED WITH:

BC Federation of Labour

BC General Employees' Union

Canadian Labour Congress

National Union of Public & General Employees

International Transport Workers' Federation

“British Columbians deserve a ferry service model that puts people first.” That’s what former NDP Transportation Minister Claire Trevena said in 2019 when she announced changes to the *Coastal Ferry Act*. It’s as true today as it was then.

We urge you to review this decision and ensure BC Ferries is acting in the public interest. We would welcome the chance to speak with your office about this pressing matter.

Sincerely,

BC FERRY & MARINE WORKERS’ UNION

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eric McNeely', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric McNeely
Provincial President