

The Ferry Commissioner's Review of the Coastal Ferry Act

Key recommendations affecting Gabriola's ferry service

1 : Changing the emphasis of the Act

- **The principle of a greater reliance on “user pay” should be removed from the Act** (*which presently requires ferry routes to move towards a greater reliance on a user pay system so as to reduce, over time, the service fee contributions by the government*)
- **The principle of eliminating cross subsidy from the major routes to other routes should be removed from the Act.** (*At present, any excess income earned on the major routes is used to provide Coastsaver discounted fares on those routes*)
- **Future price caps should be set at one level for all routes** (*typically the price cap on the minor routes is set at a higher level than on the major routes*)

2 : The Ferry Commissioner's role

- **The primary responsibility of the Commissioner should be to protect the interests of ferry users and the taxpayer.** (*at present, the Commissioner's prime responsibility is to ensure the financial stability of the ferry operator. Last year, Bill 20 introduced a new obligation to take account of interests of ferry users*)
- **The Commissioner should have the authority to determine the respective interests of the ferry users, the taxpayers and the ferry operator**
- **The Commissioner should empowered to authorize a municipal or regional government to “buy down” ferry fares** (*at present, the Province has full responsibility for supporting ferry services*)

3 : Changing priorities for the Province

- **The Province should work collaboratively with BC Ferries to develop a long-term vision for ferry services**
- **The Province should make provision for some improvements to capacity utilization.** (*Implying a need to reduce or remove some poorly used ferry services*)
- **The Province should consider an increase in subsidies to hold future price cap increases to the rate of inflation** (*price caps determine the maximum increase that may be applied to average fares in order to ensure that the projected costs of the ferry operator's business will be met and typically assume no change in Provincial subsidy*)