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Canadian Ferry Association • Association canadienne des traversiers

PRESS RELEASE

Ferry-dependent communities to be impacted by lack of federal support for sector

For immediate release

Ottawa, July 20, 2020 – The Canadian Ferry Association (CFA) is warning ferry-dependent communities that the lack of federal government support received by operators will impact the economic and social recovery post COVID-19.

While the sector has played a key role to transport first responders, essential travelers and goods to ferry-dependent communities during the pandemic, it has received no support from recent federal relief measures. The federally regulated sector was encouraged to continue its operations during the crisis even though it faced steep decreases in revenues, mounting losses and now added costs to adapt to the new reality.

“The Canadian Ferry Association is calling on the government to show more flexibility and support a crucial part of Canada’s transportation infrastructure,” said Serge Buy, CFA’s CEO.

Organizations such as BC Ferries, Owen Sound Transportation Company and the Société des traversiers du Québec are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy. While a small fully private part of the sector is eligible for funding, some are facing denials. One such example is the Ottawa River ferries that cannot qualify due to their inability to use 2019 as a comparative year for revenues as a result of the floods.

Other measures, including the recently announced \$19 billion in transfers to the provinces, may support some ferries that operate as part of municipal transit infrastructure, but the vast majority of the sector is, once again, ignored.

“This lack of support for the ferry sector is dividing communities in Canada into those that take urban transit in large municipalities and those that rely on other modes of transportation such as ferries,” said Mr. Buy.

CFA will continue discussions with the federal government to help ensure that the sector’s contribution to the country-wide efforts during the pandemic and the recovery are properly recognized and financially supported.

The sector estimates its losses at over \$450 million. The impact on ferry-dependent communities could include reduction in services, fleet renewal delays, cancellation of shore-based infrastructure projects and delays in implementation of green energy projects.

For further information, contact CFA’s CEO, Serge Buy at sbuy@canadianferry.ca or 613-720-1777.

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ABOUT CFA

In 2019, ferries in Canada transported about 55 million passengers, 22 million vehicles and billions of dollars of goods in communities throughout the country, from urban centres to remote regions.

The Canadian Ferry Association represents the sector and its members include eight provincial governments, large urban municipalities, First nations and Crown corporations and private corporations (such as BC Ferries).