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CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT

DATE: 13 February 2014

TO: Board Chair Reginald Moody and Board Members

FROM: Darla Blake, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: **BC Ferries Services – CCRD actions and updates report**

RECOMMENDATION

That Central Coast Regional ****

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 2 – Investment and Support for Public Infrastructure and Services

Objective 3 – Our objective is to lobby senior governments and their crown agencies for continuous maintenance, improvement and scheduling of regional transportation infrastructure

BACKGROUND

At its 12 December 2013, Board of Director heard a delegation from the Bella Coola Valley Tourism Association and four local business owners expressing concerns about the November 2013 announcement by the provincial government to cancel BC Ferries Route 40.

Chair Moody-Humchitt explained to that meeting actions CCRD had taken to date, regarding the BC Ferries issue. The Chair also reiterated that we are all in this together and the actions by the government totally contradicted what they first said they would do.

The Board resolved (13-12-04) that a briefing paper was to be prepared for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (Jordan Stone). The paper was prepared and sent to the Premier, Minister Stone and various other ministers whose portfolios touched on impacts from the BC Ferries decision to cut Route 40. Copies were also sent to tourism associations and others who have expressed concerns to the CCRD.

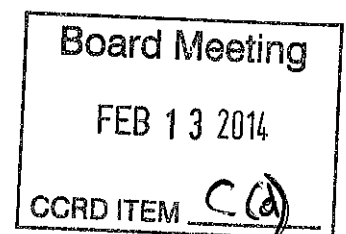
This report has been prepared to update on actions and other information that has come to hand, since the 12 December 2013 Board meeting.

CONSULTATION

N/A

LEGISLATION /POLICY

Nil



BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Within current approved budget:	N/A
Requires further budget consideration	N/A

RISK MANAGEMENT

Administration has evaluated potential risks with the proposal and assessed these as negligible with no requirements for controls.

DISCUSSION

Actions Taken:

In accordance with resolution 13-12-04, the CAO prepared and Issues & Options/Recommendations paper on the BC Ferries Cuts to Route 40. Before sending to the Minister Transportation and Infrastructure and the Premier (copies to various ministers and opposition MLAs, local government in areas affected and tourism organizations) the CAO sent the paper to the Chair for his final comments. A copy of the paper has been included on the agenda, for your information.

Administration have received many press releases, a couple of media requests, a Tourism Industry Association of BC study, letters of support and emails from various local governments, tourism organizations, MPs and MLAs and, the Coastal Regional Chairs & CAO forum as the BC Ferries issue broadens.

AVICC sent out a survey on BC Ferries Service, interested in learning about completed or future studies/assessment undertaken by the membership on the topic of social and economic impact of BC Ferries service to local communities, including assessments on ferry service reductions and/or rate increase. Attached for your information is a copy of the CAOs response to this survey.

One of the latest communications comes from the Chair Coastal Regional Chairs forum advising there will be a march on the Legislature lawn on 11th March 2014 from 11.30am to 1.30pm. Administration has been asked to encourage our Chair or a representative from the CCRD to attend the march citing the need for all coastal communities to stick together on this issue and getting as many to the march as possible. Administration's response was the request would be put to the Board at their 13 February 2014 meeting for their consideration, subject to adequate budget allocations and availability of the Chair.

CONCLUSION

The BC Ferries issue is still gaining momentum and significant volumes of correspondence requiring responses are coming through to the Chair and CAO almost daily. All efforts are being made to ensure the Board is copied into response communications, to keep you fully informed on the matter.

A decision is requested on whether the Board wishes to send the Chair along to the march at the Legislature on 11 March 2014, subject to adequate budget allocations and availability of the Chair.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darla Blake". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Darla Blake
Chief Administrative Officer



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Encompassing the Coastal Communities of Ocean Falls, Bella Bella, Denny Island, Oweekeno and the Bella Coola Valley

31 December 2013

BC FERRIES CUTS ROUTE 40

(1.0) PREPARED FOR - Hon. Christy Clark, Premier of the Province of British Columbia, and Hon. Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure

(2.0) ISSUE

Impacts of the Provincial Government and BC Ferries' **decision to cut the *MV Queen of Chilliwack* Route 40 ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola** and reduced ferry service from Port Hardy to Bella Bella, Shearwater, Ocean Falls (and Klemtu) Route 10.

(3.0) BACKGROUND

- Minister Stone's BC Ferries Announcement 18 November, 2013 - ferry service reductions and cuts.
- BC Ferries cite low utilization of Route 40 - 29.5% (and 30-40% average utilization over 10 years). Note: **higher utilization occurs on the direct service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola (up to 71%).**
- BC Ferries cite a **need to replace the MV Queen of Chilliwack in 2016/17, although they are cutting service in 2014**. Note: There is **still a period of 3 years operational life in the vessel before replacement is required** and the MV Queen of Chilliwack was refurbished in 2010 at a cost of \$15million.
- **Ferry service reductions and cuts will adversely impact coastal families, communities and economies.** Route 40 is an essential component of the Central Coast's economy and key feature to the area's burgeoning tourism industry – notably the fastest growing economic sector in the region.
- Approximately 10 years ago, **the landmark Great Bear Rainforest Agreement** (Central and North Coast Land-use Resource Management Plan) **was enacted, restricting forestry operations on Central Coast.** The agreement was to be a unique partnership that would support economic opportunity while preserving some of BC's most spectacular wilderness areas. **The Province promised commitments to secure the wellbeing of people, communities and the ecosystems, understanding protecting the environment would cost jobs and diminish economic opportunities.** Tourism is now becoming a Central Coast mainstay.
- **Guaranteed ferry routes, adequate service levels and affordable ferry fares are critical elements in supporting the economic recovery and sustainable future for our coastal communities. Only a Provincial Government commitment to fund the continuation of the Route 40 ferry service and keeping fares reasonable, will allow sustainable economic development in tourism for the Central Coast area to continue.** Note: the principles articulated in the Coastal Ferry Service contract, state: "the coastal ferry service is integral to economic growth and development".

- **The Route 40 ferry service provides the critical marine component serving Vancouver Island communities from Victoria to Port Hardy, all Highway 20 communities, Highway 97 communities from Williams Lake south to Lytton and Highway 99 communities from Lillooet to Vancouver. Communities along these corridors benefit from social and economic opportunities as a result of the Route 40 ferry service, which completes the Discovery Coastal Circle Route.**

The benefits of maintaining the Discovery Coast Circle Route 40 ferry service (marine infrastructure) as part of the provincial highway network are far-reaching.

- **Serious recognition must be given to the fact, BC Ferries is an integral part of coastal life and the coastal transportation system. A rethink on the decision to cut Route 40 must occur.**
- **UBCM September 2013** - Coastal Regional District Chairs and CAOs met with Minister Stone and Premier Clark to discuss how **the ferry fare structure and ridership has reached a tipping point.** Any further fare increases and service reductions only exacerbate the decline in BC Ferry revenues - potentially leading to the demise of the coastal ferry system.

During that meeting Premier Clark said: fares were as high as they could get; ferry users were already paying more than their share; ferries were an essential service for the coast; and the Province wanted to work collaboratively with the group to find solutions.

The Central Coast Regional District (CCRD) and Discovery Coastal Circle Route communities are extremely **disappointed the commitment/promise to work collaboratively to find solutions, has not been honoured.** We remind: "A promise made - a promise kept!" (Premier Clark, UBCM Conference 2013)

- Additionally, there is disappointment across the region, that neither Minister Stone nor Premier Clark embraced the **UBCM 2013 resolution**: , *"That the Province:*
 - *Work cooperatively with coastal communities on implementing a long term strategy for the ferry system that supports the strengthening and sustainability of island (CCRD says: and coastal) economies and the coastal ferry service;*
 - *Implement legislation that recognizes the ferry system as an extension of our highway system and ensures fiscal fairness between the marine and terrestrial components of our highway system; and*
 - *Freezes ferry fares and service levels at 2013 levels until such times as the legislation and strategy are implemented"*.
- Recent media evidence suggests that, the latest decisions to increase fares again and reduce/cut services (particularly Route 40) will do little to address BC Ferries declining ridership or deal with its long term fiscal challenges.

(4.0) LOSS OF ROUTE 40 - BELLA COOLA – PORT HARDY (MV QUEEN OF CHILLIWACK)

While the CCRD is very concerned with the impact of reduced ferry services to Bella Bella, Ocean Falls and Shearwater/Denny Island communities, of **greatest concern is the cut to Route 40 service provided by the MV Queen of Chilliwack (a specifically sized capable ferry) from Port Hardy to Bella Coola.** This decision will have a devastating socio – economic impact, not only to the Bella Coola Valley, but also communities on Vancouver Island, and once in Bella Coola, east along Hwy 20 to Williams Lake and beyond.

Bella Coola Valley Socio-Economic Profile (figures based on 2011 census):

The following brief socio-economic profile has been included to help understand why the ferry service and tourism in the Bella Coola Valley (as a current and future economic development opportunity) is so important.

Bella Coola Valley statistics

Six small communities along Highway 20 make up the Bella Coola Valley's population of 1919. The total population for the CCRD is 3206.

Ethnic Identity

There are approximately 55% Non-Aboriginal and 45% Aboriginal Nuxalkmc (4.8% Aboriginal in BC - almost ten times the provincial average) live in the Bella Coola Valley; whereas, 37% Non-Aboriginal and 63% Aboriginal Nuxalkmc, reside in the overall CCRD region.

Economic Profile

Individuals in the Valley earning annual incomes less than \$20,000 was 32% (16% BC) and those with annual incomes over \$80,000, 11% (30% BC.) Unemployment was 12% and on the reserve 29% (6.0%BC). Although it is expected the unemployment figures are higher.

Education Profile

The region continues to have the lowest level of literacy rates in the province. The CCRD has the third highest number of 18 year olds who did not graduate from high school - 2004-2006 at 57.9% (23.2% BC.) (Profile information source: Central Coast School District 49: District/Community Literacy Plan 2012-13 and Central Coast Regional District data)

(5.0) DISCUSSION

- The landmark **Great Bear Rainforest Agreement** (Central and North Coast Land-use Resource Management Plan) established approximately 10 years ago severely **restricts forestry operations** in the region. Central Coast communities compromised their livelihoods as part of the "Agreement", with the trade-off the Provincial Government would commit to working toward enhanced human wellbeing for affected communities.

Communities were told the future was not in logging but in tourism. Lacking any industry beyond the remains of fishing and logging, communities have worked hard to diversify their economies with a fledgling but growing tourism sector. Re-defining themselves in an evolving economy has been a real struggle. **Tourism is now the only significant economic development opportunity readily available since the agreement and other than tourism no other demonstrable enhanced human wellbeing changes have occurred.**

Many, who chose to stay in the Bella Coola Valley since the loss of their forestry or fishing jobs, have been left in transitional circumstances without the skills necessary to bridge new opportunities. Efforts are being made by non-for-profit organizations and volunteers to work with the community and Nuxalk to revitalize Bella Coola, confront challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. However, the population of approximately half Non-Aboriginal and half Aboriginal continue to have annual incomes significantly lower than the rest of British Columbians and much higher unemployment.

It is impossible to stress enough, **the magnitude of the impact of losing Route 40 (particularly the direct Port Hardy to Bella Coola run). This is yet another major setback for communities, our families and future generations - one they are not likely to recover from this time. Central Coast communities have surely already sacrificed enough for the benefit of the whole province. Now is the time for the Province to truly listen and demonstrate enhanced human wellbeing changes by assisting the communities to ensure sustainability of their fledging tourism industry. This requires the BC Government to ensure tourism continues in the region and they maintain, at a minimum, a direct MV Queen of Chilliwack's ferry service from Port Hardy to Bella Coola.**

- **We reiterate, the ferry service from Port Hardy to Bella Coola is an essential component of the Discovery Coast Circle Route and key to economic sustainability and development opportunities. It brings jobs and small business to these communities and Chilcotin regions.**
- Note: The proposed feeder vessel the MV Nimpkish from Bella Bella - Bella Coola connecting with Route 10, is not a comparable or sustainable option for the region's tourist industry. The MV Nimpkish passenger capacity is 120 and vehicle capacity is only 16 (unable to carry RVs, campers and trucks). The overall time for the trip from Port Hardy to Bella Coola will now take up to 33hrs; whereas the MV Queen of Chilliwack's capacity is 115 vehicles (RVs, campers and truck capable) and 381 passengers.
- **Tourism from Route 40 generates millions of dollars in revenue and taxes, provides critical jobs to the region and benefits business income and communities throughout Vancouver Island, the Central Coast and Cariboo Interior regions.**

It is feared the loss of tourism as a direct result of the cut to the Route 40 direct service, will drive many from the region(s) to relocate, in search of jobs. **The Province should also anticipate a net loss of tax revenue from loss of business, tourism and residents.**

Another risk is, the relocation of families which will undermine family connections, support networks, culture and the region's economy. Families leaving could potentially reduce businesses, services and access to healthcare, access to schools, and the regional district's already stretched tax base for the provision of local services.

- **Many local business owners have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to create a positive tourist experience worth remembering.** The Discovery Coast Circle Route and Great Bear Rainforest are only now starting to gain international exposure; as a "must do" journey – despite a lack of appropriate marketing by the Province or BC Ferries.
- **Tourism operators, businesses and residents have indicated to CCRD, that at a minimum, a direct link Route 40 ferry service from Port Hardy to Bella Coola is critical to their sustainability** - be it supermarkets, restaurants, gas stations, eco-tourism, agri-tourism, and cultural tourism. Any idea that a tourist would drive 6 hours (there and back) from Williams Lake to Bella Coola is folly and certainly not conducive to a well-rounded tourist experience like the Discovery Coast Circle Route.
- **Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC advises significant work is currently being undertaken by the Nuxalk Nation to diversify into Aboriginal tourism, adding further value to tourists' experience.**

It is estimated, the 100 Aboriginal cultural tourism market ready businesses will gross industry revenues of around \$68 million by 2017 and provide over 4000 full and part time jobs; potentially making Aboriginal tourism along coastal BC a key ingredient to growth and sustainability of communities.

- Cutting Route 40 ferry service will negatively impact not only existing business operations; it will also make feasibility of new ventures more challenging (particularly developing Aboriginal tourism).
- Cutting Route 40 will also impact the cost of living expenses to residents, into the future. **Tourist dollars help to ensure the cost of basic commodities like food and gasoline remain affordable in the Bella Coola Valley.**
- **The bulk of businesses and the communities along Highway 20 are now dependent on tourism for survival – a fact that cannot be overstated.**

- Central Coast Regional District, 16 Coastal Chambers of Commerce, the Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce, the BC Hotel Association and Heiltsuk First Nations and Nuxalk First Nations, the Bella Coola Valley Tourism and more, hold the view **there is a critical need for a direct ferry service (Route 40) from Port Hardy to Bella Coola – with the bulk of the trip through the fjords during daylight hours.** Other areas such as Bella Bella, Shearwater, and Ocean Falls are already serviced by other ferry route services – i.e. Route 10 and the *MV Nimpkish*.
- There is a view across several regions that the Provincial Government and BC Ferries have failed in their fiduciary responsibility and fiscal fairness by discriminating against rural coastal communities, particularly those along the Discovery Coast Circle Route and Highway 20 to Williams Lake from Bella Coola.
- Cancelling the *MV Queen of Chilliwack* ferry will also have a potentially serious impact on the health and wellbeing of many women in the Bella Coola Valley (if not region). A mobile mammography machine comes to Bella Coola Hospital, on the *MV Queen of Chilliwack* each year.

The *MV Nimpkish* proposed as a feeder ferry service to and from Bella Coola, connecting with Route 10, is not big enough to accommodate the vehicle bringing in the equipment and the “Freedom Road” Highway 20 is too rough for the sensitive equipment. Any option to fly women in and out of Bella Coola is costly and would overstretch the financial resources of a hospital that already struggles to balance its budget.

- **Overall, the cost of the decision (fiscally and politically) to cut the *MV Queen of Chilliwack* ferry service from Port Hardy to Bella Coola (Route 40) will far outweigh any cost savings to BC Ferries.**

(6.0) ACTION REQUESTED TO FINDING A CONSENSUS RESOLUTION: CCRD ask that:

- The Premier honour the commitment to work together by establishing forthwith an Issues and Resolutions Working Group for Route 40 to find consensus resolutions that hold sustainable long term answers to the issue.
- The Premier will, forthwith, **reverse the decision to cut the ferry service Route 40 ensuring the 2014 tourist season continues. Route 40 is to be a well marketed direct Port Hardy to Bella Coola route (ensuring the bulk of the trip occurs in daylight hours while in the fjords)** and will continue until operating while the Working Group finds consensus resolutions. Note: in the past, the direct trip between Port Hardy and Bella Coola was a well utilized service.
- While the Working Group finds consensus resolutions, the Province will agree to retain the direct ferry service Route 40 possibly for a further 3+years (until the end of the *MV Queen of Chilliwack* serviceable life) or until another vessel is sourced capable of delivering a similar service and capacity as the *MV Queen of Chilliwack*. Note: *MV Queen of Chilliwack* was refurbished in 2010 at a cost of \$15million (her service life predicted to end in 2017 or later).
- The Premier will ensure Working Group discussions include a direct ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola with either the *MV Queen of Chilliwack*, or a vessel capable of providing similar service and capacity. This direct ferry service will be considered an integral part of coastal life and the coastal transportation system. It will be reliable, affordable, and government supported in order to sustain the region’s economies. As part of the government’s support, legislation will be implemented that recognizes the ferry system as an extension of the highway system, ensuring fiscal fairness between the marine and terrestrial components of our highway

system.

- **The Working Group will be made up of key representatives from communities/organisations impacted by the Route 40 cut ferry service (such as Central Coast Regional District, District of Port Hardy, Bella Coola Tourism Association, Aboriginal Tourism Association, and Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism), BC Ferries and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.**
- **The Working Group will establish a set of agreed principles and outcomes to guide their process and measure progress to ensure they remain on track; agree to work diligently to differentiate between “positions” and “interests” and are prepared to use mediation to identify common goals and interests as a means of resolving this issue. Individuals in the Working Group will have the delegated authority to speak and make decisions on behalf of the areas/communities/organisations they represent. Each individual will agree to empathy and understanding of other’s situation, attitudes, concerns and motives. All parties agree to not undermine the other. Each individual must agree to listen, more than speak. Each individual will be prepared to offer constructive alternatives for desired long term outcomes (and ensure the working group is strategic in their thinking). Each community/organisation represented in the Working Group will be prepared to invest appropriate resources (human, financial, time) toward finding long lasting sustainable outcomes with accountabilities factored into all resolutions.**

The Premier will instruct Minister Stone to bring to the Working Group table the best available information from other Ministries responsible for Jobs, Tourism, Small Business, Community, Cultural Development, Aboriginal Affairs, Finance and Health to ascertain, from each ministry, on likely impacts that will affect the Discovery Coast Circle Route communities, in the event of a loss of ferry service.

- **The Province will complete and provide to the Working Group a comprehensive economic and social impact assessment on affected communities from Port Hardy to Bella Coola and across the Chilcotin Plateau to Williams Lake. The information will enable the Working Group to develop acceptable strategies for economic viability and impacts on the region, particularly where any reductions or cuts to ferry service are proposed.**
- **If at the end, the Working Group’s consensus decision is to not maintain the Route 40 ferry service, further work will continue by the Group to find economic opportunities equal to or better than tourism for affected communities within the Discovery Coastal Circle Route 40. The Province will provide adequate funding and other assistance in the development of alternatives, to ensure sustainability of the regions’ economies; critically important to the Bella Coola Valley and communities along Hwy 20 who have come to rely on tourism as a means of economic sustainability and survival!**

IN CLOSING:

The information above has been pulled together for insight and suggestions toward resolutions, with the intention of an all parties commitment to work collaboratively to find consensus resolutions.

We ask that the current decision to cut Route 40 ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola be rescinded, forthwith; a public announcement be made on how the Province has genuinely listened to communities and has agreed to reinstate a direct Route 40 ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola for the 2014 tourist season and beyond; and advise there will be an Issues and Resolutions Working Group set up to work on finding acceptable and

agreeable long term economic sustainable solutions to the issues.

The CCRD respectfully asks you (Premier Clark) and Minister Stone to embrace and action all our suggestions contained within, centering on finding sustainable solutions to the Route 40 ferry service dilemma; rather than reading this document as “just another letter, or issues and options brief” containing possible solutions.

The CCRD believe finding a solution is possible and we are committed to this – it is not based on “wishful thinking”. We are talking about the impacts on economic sustainability and the wellbeing of communities and businesses on Vancouver Island, the Central Coast, the Chilcotin and all along the whole Discovery Coastal Circle Route, in British Columbia. So let’s do what is right for these communities, not what is easy – Make the decision to Save Route 40!!!!

We now look forward to your early response to this Briefing Paper.

Respectfully submitted
Reg Moody-Humchitt
Chair, Central Coast Regional District (CCRD)

Prepared on behalf of the Central Coast Regional District
Darla Blake, Chief Administrative Officer

Copies to:

Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation
 Honourable Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Tourism and Small Business
 Honourable John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
 Honourable Steve Thompson, Minister of Forests, Land and Natural Resource Operations
 Honourable Terry Lake, Minister of Health
 Honourable Coralee Oakes, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
 Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Finance
 Honourable Pat Pimm, Minister of Agriculture
 Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Environment
 BC Member of the Legislative Assembly
 Jennifer Rice, MLA for North Coast (Opposition Critic for Rural and Northern Health)
 Claire Trevena, MLA for North Island (Opposition Critic for the Ministry of Transportation)
 BC Ferries Commissioner, Gord Macatee
 BC Ferries Service Inc., President and CEO Mike Corrigan
 Coastal Regional District Chairs and CAOs Group
 AVICC members
 Cariboo Regional District Board and CAO Janis Bell
 Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism, CEO Amy Thacker
 Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia, CEO Keith Henry
 Nuxalk Nation Band, Chief Wally Webber
 Bella Coola Valley Tourism Association, President Leonard Ellis
 Bella Coola Hospital, COO Michel Bazille
 Bella Coola Heli Sports Inc, Beat Steiner
 Tweedsmuir Travel
 City of Williams Lake

Darla Blake

From: Darla Blake <cao@ccrd-bc.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 08, 2014 4:23 PM
To: 'Premier@gov.bc.ca'; 'Minister.transportation@gov.bc.ca'
Cc: 'FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca'; 'JTST.Minister@gov.bc.ca'; 'STSB.Minister@gov.bc.ca';
 'ABR.Minister@gov.bc.ca'; 'FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca'; 'hlth.minister@gov.bc.ca';
 'CSCD.Minister@gov.bc.ca'; 'AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca'; 'Env.minister@gov.bc.ca';
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 Chair'; 'Barry Pages, Skeena-Queen Charlotte Board Chair'; 'Bev Parnham, Mt.
 Waddington Vice-Chair'; 'Cindy Solda, Alberni-Clayoquot Board Chair'; 'Dave Rushton,
 Mt. Waddington Board Chair'; 'Edwin Grieve, Comox Valley Board Chair'; 'Garry Nohr,
 Sunshine Coast Board Chair'; 'Jim Abram, Strathcona Board Vice-Chair'; 'Joe Stanhope,
 Nanaimo Board Chair'; 'Metro Vancouver Board Chair'; 'Reg Moody, Central Coast Board
 Chair'; 'Rob Hutchins, Cowichan Valley Board Chair'; 'Sheila Malcolmson, Islands Trust
 Board Chair'; 'Ted Lewis, Strathcona Board Chair'; 'Linda Adams, Islands Trust CAO';
 'Linda Burgoyne, Administrative Coordinator, Nanaimo RD'; 'Paul Thorkelsson, Nanaimo
 CAO'; 'Russ Hotsenpiller, Strathcona CAO'; 'Russell Dyson, CAO, Alberni-Clayoquot';
 'Skeena-Queen Charlotte CAO'; 'Teresa Warnes, Executive Assistant, Comox Valley RD';
 'Tom Yates, Strathcona RD Corporate Administrator'; 'Treace Alton, Capital RD Executive
 Assistant'; 'Tricia Bowen, Metro Vancouver Executive Assistant'; 'Warren Jones, Cowichan
 Valley CAO'; 'AVICC'; 'Coast Mountain News (cmnews@caribooadvisor.com)'; 'Brian
 Lande'; 'Cathi McCullagh'; 'David Anderson'; 'Ivan Tallio'
Subject: Central Coast Regional District - BC Ferries Cuts Route 40 - Submission of Issues and
 Options/Solutions
Attachments: FINAL Central Coast Regional District response - BC Ferries Cut to Route 40 -
 2013-12-31.pdf
Importance: High

Good Afternoon

Attached please find the Central Coast Regional District’s submission to Premier Clark and the Honourable Minister Stone on the proposed BC Ferries cuts – and more specifically to Route 40 Discovery Coastal Circle Route.

The issues and options/solutions paper has been pulled together for the Premier and Minister Stone’s insight into the magnitude and impact of losing Route 40 Discovery Coastal Circle Route, not just to the Bella Coola Valley but communities stretching from Victoria to Port Hardy, all Highway 20 communities, Highway 97 communities from Williams Lake south to Lytton and Highway 99 communities from Lillooet to Vancouver. Clearly this is not just a Bella Coola Valley or Central Coast Regional District issue; this is an issue that will have devastating social and economic consequences on communities along the identified corridors; and for some this is about their sheer survival!

We respectfully ask Premier Clark and Minister Stone to embrace and action all suggestions contained in our paper which has centered on proposed sustainable resolutions to the ferry service dilemma, through consensus. We also respectfully ask the Premier to rescind the decision to cut Route 40, forthwith, allowing the 2014 Discovery Coastal Circle Route tourist season to take place; while consensus resolutions that hold sustainable long term answers are found through an Issues and Resolutions Working Group for Route 40, as proposed in CCRD’s submission paper.

We now await your reply.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of
Central Coast Regional District, Chair
Reg Moody – Humchitt

Yours sincerely

Darla Blake
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Response to AVICC survey on BC Ferries Services: (socioeconomic impact and assessment)

The AVICC Executive is interested in learning about completed, current or future studies/assessments undertaken by the membership on the topic of social and economic impacts of BC Ferries service to local communities, including assessments on ferry service reductions and/or rate increases. Please indicate below what activities your local government has planned, initiated or completed on this topic.

Local Government Name

Your Name

First Name

Last Name

Job Title

Email Address

Has your local government planned, initiated or completed any studies or assessments on the social and/or economic impacts of BC Ferries Service to your community, including service reductions to BC Ferries routes and/or fare increases?

Current Studies

Yes No

Response Comments to the AVICC Executive Survey:

Good Morning

The answer is yes and no - as CCRD is such a small regional district we are not in a financial or human resourced position to complete a comprehensive social economic study/assessment on the impacts of the BC Ferries Service cut to the Route 40, which will have a major effect on our communities.

As an alternative the Board asked me to prepare and send on their behalf an Issues & Options/Recommendations paper to the Premier, Minister Stone, copies to all Ministers whose responsible portfolios relate to the potential impact on communities along the Discovery Coast Circle Route 40 (sea and land), opposition leaders etc.

For the information of the AVICC Executive I will forward a copy of the paper, which was based on information CCRD holds, information sent to me from local and regional businesses and individuals outlining the plight they will face once the impact of the loss of the ferry service (Route 40) kicks in.

CCRD no longer having an Economic Development Officer or someone who could dedicate their time, knowledge and skill-set to researching and analyzing the necessary qualitative and quantitative information for a comprehensive socio-economic assessment study. I feel our paper falls short on being as in-depth as necessary for such an important issue - that said, it is what it is.

To keep the Board informed and to actively advocate on behalf of our communities, I have also personally been working with and providing information to various Tourism organizations, the Coast RD Chairs and CAO group on the BC Ferries issue and information/discussion with the BC Ferries Coalition group. The BC Ferries Coalition put the CCRD Issues & Options/Recommendations paper on their website.

The CCRD Board would appreciate any help and/or support from other organizations to convince BC Ferries of the socioeconomic benefits of retaining the direct route ferry service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola. The paper I send you suggests more effective ways to ensure better ridership, profitability AND a better experience for our tourists. To note: the Route 40 direct route service during the daylight hours has on average a 71% ridership. BC Ferries have focused on the lower percentage ridership and losses on "milk run" sailings between Port Hardy, Bella Bella, Denny Island and then Bella Coola. And the Discovery Coast Circle Route is poorly marketed by BC Ferries - better marketing would improve ridership (provided they don't price the trip completely out of affordability, which is where it has been heading).

For your information, Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC) have prepared a paper outlining potential socioeconomic impacts based on information they received from a number of their members who will be affected by the loss of the ferry service (Route 40). Although I feel the TIABC quoted dollar figures are low (when I checked with their CEO, I was advised their information was based on those who replied to their survey). The TIABC paper also pointed out the Route 40 actually makes a profit, when you take into account provincial tax take from the tourists. I would recommend AVICC Executive read the TIABC paper.

Thank you for providing CCRD the opportunity to submit to AVICC Executive our plight in the Central Coast region, regarding the BC Ferries reductions and cut to services. More specifically the Route 40 service cut which will have the biggest and most devastating impact to communities from Bella Coola across to Williams Lake, all of which are now dependent on tourism as a means of a livelihood.

It is very disappointing the Premier and Minister Stone have made a decision based on the bottom line of a corporation over the bottom line impact and devastation of communities dependent on the Route 40 BC Ferry Service. It would seem the Premier and Minister Stone are entrenched in their position on this issue. I base this assumption on all the copies of correspondence from the Premier, sent to me from various other communities in response to their letters to the Premier, since Minister Stone's announcement in November 2013.

I will now forward my paper to AVICC Executive for their information and consideration, as an independent email.

Yours sincerely
Darla Blake
Chief Administrative Officer