

BC Ferries fare increases subject to review process

BY SHIRLEY BOND, VANCOUVER SUN FEBRUARY 11, 2011

Many of our coastal communities have relied upon ferries for decades, and it is important to ensure the services BC Ferries provides remain efficient, and fares are reasonable.

I want to be clear no changes have been approved for price caps or service levels for the next performance term that begins in 2012.

The BC Ferries commissioner is in the process of setting the preliminary price caps for 2012 through 2016.

That process requires that BC Ferries submit information such as its operational costs, capital investment plans and ridership levels to the independent ferry commissioner.

The commissioner will then conduct an extensive review of that material before making a preliminary ruling on price caps by March 31.

After the determination of the preliminary price cap has been made, the public will have an opportunity to review the ferry commissioner's decision and provide feedback.

As part of that process, government will also review the information, including the current subsidy provided to BC Ferries. A final decision on price caps for 2012-2016 will not be made until Sept. 30. I can assure British Columbians this government is committed to maintaining a ferry service that provides efficient and reliable service.

Since 2001, the total contribution by taxpayers to BC Ferries is over \$1 billion. The new model for BC Ferries established by our government in 2003 has been a success.

Customer satisfaction is at an alltime high of 91 per cent, compared to 82 per cent in 2003.

Under the new model, on-time performance has increased, new and improved vessels have been brought in and terminals have been upgraded.

Shirley Bond

Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

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