



Rural Municipality of Belfast

Mayor: Garth Gillis; Chief Administrative Officer: Bob Brooks
Incorporated 1972

September 24, 2024

Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Member of Parliament – Cardigan
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON L1A 0A6

RE: ***Essential Two Ferry Service at Wood Islands***

Dear Mr. MacAulay

As of the date of this letter, both Ferries being operated by Northumberland Ferries Ltd. (NFL) are currently out of operation. MV Saaremaa went into repair this morning while the MV Confederation has been out of commission since September 16, 2024 and is undergoing hull work in Pictou, Nova Scotia.

There are two major concerns with this situation; the first one is that without a Ferry in use there is no secondary egress assisting Islanders off the island if something were to happen to the Confederation Bridge. The secondary issue, as noted in our previous correspondence back in June of 2023, is the devastating effects of not having a ferry service to the Eastern businesses who rely on that traffic even during the shoulder seasons.

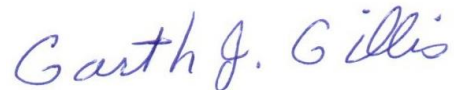
In the 2023 Confederation Bridge Transportation Continuity Plan (the Plan) issued by Transport Canada on page 41, it states that the NFL would need to lease two additional vessels in the event of the Plan being put into action, which would enable 24 crossings per day. However, now the people of Prince Edward Island have zero crossings per day.

Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB) businesses are supplied by Transport Trucks to and from businesses throughout the RMB municipality and across the whole Island. Additionally, many RMB residents use the ferry to travel across to Nova Scotia to see family, or seek required medical care in Halifax. This can save people travel time which in some cases is critical and time-sensitive.

Again, RMB Council are pleading urgently for your assistance and support for two reliable working vessels to support the 2023 Confederation Bridge Continuity Plan and to also keep our local businesses thriving. A formal plan for ferry service at Wood Islands is critically needed and must be developed in a timely manner to return to reliable ferry service at Wood Islands as soon as possible.

Thank-you in advance for your consideration. The Rural Municipality of Belfast Council is meeting on October 16th and Council would like invite you to attend our meeting and speak to this issue. Council awaits further updates on actions your government is taking to resolve this issue as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Mayor Garth Gillis
Rural Municipality of Belfast

cc: Honourable Dennis King – Premier – Government of Prince Edward Island
Honourable Rob Lantz – Minister of Housing Land and Communities
Honourable Ernie Hudson – Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Honourable Cory Deagle – Minister of Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture
Honourable Darlene Compton – MLA – Belfast/Murray River
Northumberland Ferries – PEI
Council – Rural Municipality of Belfast
CAO Bob Brooks – Rural Municipality of Belfast