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News Release
For Immediate Release

Zero-Tolerance for Ferry Disruption

Coalition of BC Businesses Applies to Intervene in Labour Board Hearing

Vancouver: The Coalition of BC Businesses applied to the BC Labour Relations Board for intervenor status to stop any disruption of ferry services from a labour dispute.

The Coalition of BC Businesses and its members are extremely concerned that should there be a strike, a significant reduction in ferry services would cause severe economic hardship to the B.C. communities and small and medium-sized businesses that depend on consistent and predictable ferry services.

"BC Ferries is more than just a scenic tourist cruise. It's a vital component of our economy. People's jobs and livelihoods depend on it," said Philip Hochstein, chair of the Coalition of BC Businesses. "We have zero-tolerance for any disruption of ferry services."

Barring an agreement between the BC Ferry Corporation and the BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union on the setting of essential service levels for B.C. ferry sailings, the Labour Relations Board will hold a formal adjudication process and rule on the level of ferry services.

In its letter yesterday to the Labour Relations Board requesting intervenor status, the Coalition states that it "seeks to intervene in the hearing with respect to the setting of essential service levels to represent the interests of BC's small and medium-sized business community in ensuring maximum operation of the BC Ferry systems."

The Coalition argues that the Labour Relations Board should err on the side of the public interest and hold BC Ferries to a 'business as usual' schedule.

"BC Ferries is an essential service to hundreds of thousands of British Columbians," said Hochstein. "The labour board should not allow the communities and businesses that depend on BC Ferries to become casualties of a labour dispute."

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Philip Hochstein is chair of the Coalition of B.C. Businesses, which represents over 50,000 small and medium-sized businesses active in all sectors of BC's economy.