

Town of North Haven
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North Haven, Maine 04853
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August 28, 2019

Jim Billings
Chief Counsel
Maine DOT, Legal Division
16 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04330

Re: Proposed Increase in Maine State Ferry Service Ticket Prices

Dear Mr. Billings:

In addition to the testimony North Haven's representatives made at the August 19th hearing, we offer the following written comments.

As our highway to the mainland, the ferry is the essential component to our way of life. Without it, our community would not — could not — exist as we know it today. Any increase in prices affects our quality of life and the affordability of living on an island. Because of its essentialness, increases in ferry ticket prices hit us especially hard. In particular, increasing the truck rates will hit everyone who works and lives on the islands: businesses cannot absorb the increased prices and neither can year-round residents. Gordon and Marnelle Bubar run the North Haven Grocery. It is the quintessential mom-and-pop business. Mr. Bubar notes in his letter to you (attached) that the \$4.25 and \$4.75 per foot rates that would go into effect with your new proposal equates to a \$10,000 per year increase in his cost of goods sold. He says he was able to adjust to the \$3.40 per foot rates, but will have no choice but to pass the cost of the 2019 increase on to his customers. If his customers choose to order more through on-line stores or go to the mainland for their groceries, his and his wife's business will face further strain. While not a significant financial relief, perhaps you could at least include the driver's passage in the \$4.25/\$4.75 per-foot cost of the truck ticket. This would further demonstrate Commissioner Van Note's willingness to listen to the Ferry Service's customers and make adjustments that reflect their concerns.

We understand the need to meet your budget requirements. To be successful, the Ferry Service's ticket prices must achieve equilibrium between costs and demand — ridership. North Haven wants to continue to work with the Ferry Service and DOT to address costs and find ways to increase ridership. In this vein, North Haven would welcome the opportunity to discuss adding a fourth boat in the summer months when demand is at its peak. If this could be done without significant increases in cost, it could add welcome additional revenue to your operations.

We appreciate your efforts to engage the island communities and to listen to our concerns. The process you, Commissioner Van Note, and the rest of the DOT and Maine State Ferry Service leadership team ran was refreshingly fair. Regardless of the outcome of this rate proposal, we look forward to maintaining open communications and a meaningful dialogue.

Yours truly,

//s//

Rick Lattimer
Town Administrator

Attachment: Letter from Gordon Bubar, owner, North Haven Grocery