

TOWN OF NORTH HAVEN

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March 19, 2020

Governor Janet Mills
Office of the Governor
#1 State House Station
Augusta, Maine, 04333-0001

Re: **Coronavirus and the Maine State Ferry Service**

Dear Governor Mills,

I am writing on behalf of the North Haven Select Board to request that you take appropriate steps under your emergency powers to help our island contain and combat the Coronavirus pandemic.

Contrary to reports, the Select Board did not act to restrict travel to the island because year-round residents dislike people with summer homes, are fearful of outsiders, or want to deny people access to their properties. From various sources, the Select Board had heard that people were headed to the island to get away from larger population centers. This idea is entirely understandable. I myself lived in Virginia until 2018; my first reaction to the news of the virus would have been to pack the car and bring my family to the island, a place that is friendly and seems safe.

Yet, as someone who vacations on North Haven, I am sure you can appreciate our limited resources and the fragility of our infrastructure. With this in mind the Select Board thoughtfully considered its actions and did what it could to attempt to persuade people that North Haven is not an appropriate refuge from COVID-19. With the help of an attorney from your office and thoughtful input from people here on the island and elsewhere, the Board rescinded the order two days later and has instead issued a resolution. The resolution strongly encourages people to refrain from traveling away from the places where they currently live — whether that is on North Haven or elsewhere. The resolution also recommends that if people reside in places with better access to medical care than North Haven can provide they should refrain from traveling to the island. The Select Board believes this is consistent with the advice coming from your office, President Trump, the U.S. CDC, and the Maine CDC.

The Board is hopeful you might authorize the Maine State Ferry Service to take reasonable and appropriate steps to keep the virus from spreading. The islands recognize that the crews are already sanitizing common surfaces, providing extra paper towel and hand sanitizer, and limiting human-to-human contact. At least one crew member has offered to pick up groceries on the

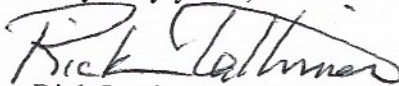
mainland for people who might be unable or reluctant to leave the island. The Select Board is grateful for these steps. Additional steps might include:

- Tying open the passenger compartment doors during loading and unloading so people do not have to touch the door handles
- Encouraging passengers to use the restrooms in the ferry terminal rather than the heads on the ferries, which are smaller and more awkward to use in a sanitary manner
- Encouraging passengers to remain in their vehicles to the extent possible rather than walking through the passenger compartments
- Including in the Ferry Service's Continuity of Operations Plan an option to prioritize freight, particularly food and medical supplies, over passenger travel, unless that travel is to leave the islands due to a serious medical condition
- Reducing the number of passengers in the cabin to allow for social distancing and to comply with your order regarding no more than 10 people in one space
- Encouraging the Ferry Service to place signs in or around the terminal noting that the islands have limited capacity to care for people who become sick

These are just examples. The Ferry Service itself will know far better how to protect passengers and crews than we do.

Finally, North Haven's concern for the fragility of our infrastructure includes a concern for the captains and crews of the ferries, the line attendants, and the rest of the Ferry Service personnel. These people are highly trained, dedicated professionals who keep us connected to the mainland. Please do whatever you can to keep them safe.

Very truly yours,



Rick Lattimer

Town Administrator

P.S. All of us on the island greatly appreciate your leadership and the steps you have taken to minimize the impact of the virus in our communities and in our state. Please take good care of yourself too.

Copy to: Sharyn Polhman, Knox County Commissioner