

News from Interferry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ferry industry calls for COVID-19 government financial assistance

Victoria, Canada, 26 March 2020: Global trade body Interferry warns that ferry operators need government backing to offset unsustainable losses incurred - expected to be in the billions of dollars - while maintaining lifeline services during COVID-19 pandemic

Trade association Interferry, on behalf of its members, is calling for all levels of government across the globe to include the ferry industry in their respective COVID-19 financial aid packages. This support will be crucial for ferry operators to continue providing essential services to the communities they serve during these unprecedented times, and to ensure that critical infrastructure and personnel are available once the global economy begins to recover.

Specifically, Interferry is asking for support for the ferry industry from various levels of government as follows: (1) direct financial support to replace lost and severely reduced revenues; (2) provision of interest free loans; (3) tax relief from payroll taxes and other government imposed taxes; and (4) relief from fixed Port fees (where applicable).

The ferry industry transports more than two billion passengers annually - equivalent to the airline industry - along with 250 million personal vehicles and 40 million trucks and trailers. Worldwide, COVID-19 travel restrictions have significantly reduced the number of passengers carried, and in many locations have closed passenger ferry service entirely. However, many ro-pax operators continue to provide freight service even though they are no longer able to transport passengers or personal vehicles.

“Ferry operators understand the essential role they play in keeping the supply chain channels open,” says Interferry CEO Mike Corrigan. “These companies continue to provide lifeline service, recognizing they are incurring mounting financial losses that are unsustainable over the longer-term. Operators are reporting declines in passenger traffic between 75 and 100 per cent and reductions in vehicle traffic of more than 50 per cent.”

Corrigan adds: “Interferry would also like to recognize the extraordinary efforts and sacrifices that ferry crews across the globe are making to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of vital goods. With families at home to worry about, and an end to the COVID-19 crisis still unknown, ferry crews are showing up for work each day to ensure that ships sail and goods get delivered.”

Interferry member companies continue to follow the advice, guidance and directives from their regional Public Health Agencies and governments, as well as the World Health Organization. As COVID-19's impact across the globe varies depending on geographic regions, Interferry suggests that journalists contact its members directly to understand the specific impact of COVID-19 on their respective operations. This includes the protocols they have put in place to mitigate the spread of the virus – such as aggressive cleaning and disinfecting routines on board their vessels and at their terminals, together with enhanced measures to protect the health and safety of crews.

About Interferry

Interferry represents the worldwide ferry industry. The shipping association has a diverse membership of more than 260 companies across 40 countries. Interferry plays a central role representing the industry on regulatory and policy matters, notably through its consultative status at the International Maritime Organization. It also facilitates networking and communications among its members.

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