



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

December 9, 2015

The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi MP
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

Re: BC Ferries and the New Building Canada Fund

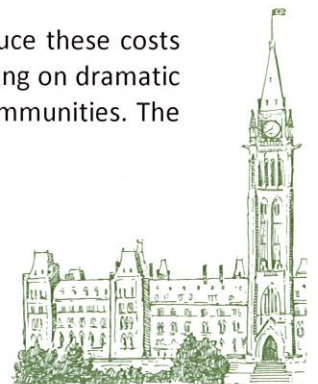
Congratulations on your appointment.

The undersigned are New Democratic Party Members of Parliament representing electoral districts on British Columbia's coast. As you may know, under the Harper Conservatives, the New Building Canada Fund ("the Fund") was not available to BC Ferries, which wished to seek funding for infrastructure, terminals, fleet upgrades and new vessels. British Columbia's ferry system is a critical transportation link for moving goods and people in coastal and remote communities and it connects the Trans-Canada Highway to Vancouver Island. As such, we believe that the coastal ferry system should be regarded in the same way as other key transportation links like roads and bridges.


We would respectfully ask that the eligibility criteria for this Fund be changed so that BC Ferries, through the Province of British Columbia, becomes eligible to apply for federal funding under the \$14 billion Fund. This kind of funding would reduce cost pressures as BC Ferries renews its fleet and develops terminals and faces other capital costs. Just in 2016, BC Ferries expects to spend \$225 million dollars on capital investments such as vessels and terminals. Its annual funding costs are approximately \$60 million dollars a year – another cost directly linked to capital investments.

We believe that enabling Federal infrastructure funding from the Fund would help reduce these costs and enable savings to be passed on to ferry users. BC Ferries has been criticized for passing on dramatic ferry increases to BC residents, which has had a devastating impact on many coastal communities. The proposed change could make an enormous difference in this regard.

We would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to elaborate on this request.



Yours very truly,



Murray Rankin, Member of Parliament, Victoria



Nathan Cullen, Member of Parliament, Skeena-Bulkley Valley



Rachel Blaney, Member of Parliament, North Island-Powell River



Randall Garrison, Member of Parliament, Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke



Gord Johns, Member of Parliament, Courtenay-Alberni



Alistair MacGregor, Member of Parliament, Cowichan-Malahat-Langford



Sheila Malcolmson, Member of Parliament, Nanaimo-Ladysmith