

COR/2020/03908

SEP 09 2020

Mr. Ben Noseworthy
Town Manager
Town of Wabana
<mailto:bennoseworthy@townofwabana.net>

Re: Ferry Connected Communities Committee

Dear Mr. Noseworthy:

Thank you for your correspondence to Premier Furey on behalf of the communities impacted by the ongoing strike by the Canadian Merchant Service Guild. As the Minister responsible for Transportation and Infrastructure, I am responding on the Premier's behalf. The Premier, the President of Treasury Board and I were pleased to meet with the Mayors of Wabana and Fogo Island this morning.

Our Government is striving for a fast and reasonable resolution to this labour dispute. Our collective bargaining process has been followed, however, the Canadian Merchant Service Guild is currently on strike. A directive from the Labour Relations Board in its interpretation of the **Public Service Collective Bargaining Act** has set specific parameters regarding the rights of these Essential Workers to strike while still operating the Essential Service with respect to the health, safety and security of the public.

The Guild spent the last three years attempting through its application to the Labour Relations Board to gain access to an arbitration process in an effort to receive more compensation than everyone else. That process failed and now ferry captains are asking taxpayers to cover a retroactive cost for a delay they caused.

We have received many emails and letters since the strike began. We have heard from residents who are getting in the ferry line at 5:00 am to ensure they make it to work. We have heard from those that are concerned that they may not be able to access medical services and tend to loved ones who may be in long term care or in hospital. We have heard from parents who are concerned that they are unable to purchase groceries and school supplies. We have heard from those who are suffering financial losses due to cancellations and lost business. I have read and responded to every email and letter, and I empathize with everyone affected.

Government provided an update on negotiations with the ferry captains in a news release dated September 3, 2020, available online at:
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/2020/exec/0903n03/>.

As stated in the release, this Government has made an offer to the Ferry Captains that we believe is fair, and includes a pay increase that is in line with increases provided to other public sector workers. We want find a solution to end this strike and get the ferry captains back to work. We have asked the Captains to reconsider this offer, particularly in light of our fiscal situation, and we remain hopeful they will do so.

Thank you for contacting us on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Bragg".

DERRICK BRAGG, MHA
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
District of Fogo Island-Cape Freels

"Lead the way, safety today"

Cc

Town of Change Islands
Town of Fogo Island
Town of Pilley's Island
Town of Ramea
Town of St. Brendan's
Town of Wabana
Canadian Merchant Service Guild
Premier Andrew Furey
Minister Steve Crocker, President of Treasury Board
Minister Brian Warr, MHA, Baie Verte - Green Bay
Minister Andrew Parsons, MHA, Burgeo - La Poile
Lloyd Parrott, MHA, Terra Nova
David Brazil, MHA, Conception Bay East- Bell Island