

**Frenchboro | Matinicus  
North Haven | Swan's Island | Vinalhaven**

July 11, 2024

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

**Re: Maine State Ferry Service – Boat Cancellations**

Dear Governor Mills,

We are writing to ask that you become personally involved in ensuring the Maine State Ferry Service is able to perform its scheduled runs to each island. As we understand things, the principal problems are hiring and retaining ferry crew members. The challenges to hiring and retaining crew include both rates of pay and meeting U.S. Coast Guard licensing requirements. We have been told these problems are insurmountable; but we are confident that your personal involvement and leadership could succeed where other efforts have not.

In writing this letter, we are not calling out DOT Commissioner Van Note or Ferry Service Director Geary. Both gentlemen have endeavored to keep the ferries operating on schedule and to minimize disruption. They have difficult jobs, with many customers to please and a diverse set of problems to resolve. In talking with us, they have been forthright and responsive.

As Governor, we are hopeful you can do two things. First, direct your senior staff to find a solution to the pay problem. Second, talk with executive leaders in the Coast Guard about licensing – including, perhaps, temporary waivers.

With the summer upon us, the lines of vehicles to get to the islands are once again long. Canceled trips or pulling boats from one island to serve another exacerbate the situation. People lose their patience, tempers flare, and complaints ensue. We ask that you commit your personal attention to this matter. We, on the islands, are happy to help however we can.

Very truly yours,

Frenchboro Select Board and Ferry Service Advisory Board Representative  
Matinicus Ferry Service Advisory Board Representative  
North Haven Select Board and Ferry Service Advisory Board Representative  
Swan's Island Select Board and Ferry Service Advisory Representative  
Vinalhaven Select Board and Ferry Service Advisory Representative

Copy to:  
Bruce Van Note, Commissioner, Maine DOT  
Bill Geary, Director, Maine State Ferry Service  
Janet Anderson, Islesboro Town Manager