



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution

Tourism Jeopardized by Ferry Cancellation

HALIFAX, NS (December 18, 2009) – The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) is extremely concerned about the announcement by Bay Ferries to end their high-speed CAT ferry service between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and Portland and Bar Harbor, Maine.

“This announcement is a serious blow to Nova Scotia’s tourism industry,” says Danny Morton, Chair of TIANS. “The loss of ferry service between the U.S. and Nova Scotia weakens our position in the marketplace and greatly diminishes our ability to draw visitors here through a key port of entry.”

From a tourism perspective, access into the province remains a critical issue. A comprehensive transportation strategy which addresses the needs of tourism and trade is crucial to the province’s success. “This loss reinforces that a critical gap exists in our ability to get visitors here through efficient and cost effective transportation,” says Morton.

The industry has been facing serious issues during the last few years. Global economic conditions have created uncertainty for an industry which has been a key revenue generator to Nova Scotia’s economy. Tourism spending in Nova Scotia generated \$1.3 billion in revenues in 2008 and contributed nearly \$204 million in provincial tax revenue. The decision to end support of the service highlights the lack of understanding of the value of tourism investment to the entire provincial economy.

TIANS urges all involved to expedite efforts to find viable permanent solutions to the ferry service into Nova Scotia. “We will not be able to build a healthy and sustainable tourism industry if we continue to ignore these very difficult issues. For both tourism and trade there needs to be a greater level of confidence in the transportation network,” says Morton.

TIANS mandate is to lead, support, represent and enhance Nova Scotia’s tourism industry. TIANS is the provincial advocate for the Nova Scotia tourism industry and strives to enhance the industry’s competitiveness and prosperity through increased professionalism and product development. In accomplishing this goal, TIANS works closely with many partners, regional and sector associations and all levels of government.

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Ms. Darlene Grant Fiander, President
Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
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December 21, 2009

Honourable Darrell Dexter
Premier of Nova Scotia
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Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T3

1099 Marginal Road, Suite 201
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Dear Premier Dexter:

We are writing to express our great concern over the announcement by Bay Ferries to discontinue Service between New England and Yarmouth. We understand this announcement was made based on the decision by your government to not provide assistance for the 2010 operating year.

Access into Nova Scotia is a critical issue for the tourism industry. This particular access point has long served as a key entry into the province and still holds tremendous potential for growth. Although we have seen declining numbers over the past few years for a number of reasons, the US market is still one of Nova Scotia's greatest opportunities for growing the visitor economy.

Our greatest concern is that there has been no strategic discussion around transportation issues and the impact on tourism and trade. Whether we can support sustainable ferry service should be a topic for broad consultation and all options should be considered including viable alternatives to the current service. This decision appears to be reactionary with little regard or understanding of the broad economic impact this loss will have that extends well beyond the actual service.

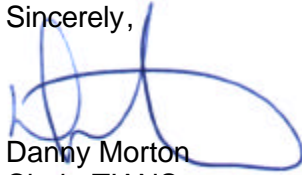
Since the announcement, we have attempted to ascertain the business case for your decision. The focus appears only on the upfront expense with no understanding of the return on the investment. TIANS supports government's efforts to look at responsible investment and strengthen the overall economy however; we believe this decision did not consider the full economic implications and the far reaching impact on tourism.

Since 1997, this service has brought more than 1.5 million people into Nova Scotia. As a result, the economic activity generated new investment in accommodations; refurbishment of existing facilities; strengthened main street businesses in rural Nova Scotia and supported hundreds of jobs.



TIANS urges the province to reconsider its position for the 2010 operating year and undertake a strategic approach to viable ferry service into Nova Scotia. We offer our assistance and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Danny Morton
Chair, TIANS



Darlene Grant Fiander
President, TIANS

cc: Honourable Percy Paris, Minister, Tourism, Culture & Heritage
Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister for the Atlantic Gateway
Honorable Dianne Ablonczy, Minister of State for Tourism
Randy Williams, President, Tourism Industry Association of Canada
Regional Tourism Industry Associations

January 12, 2010

The Honourable Percy Paris
Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage
P.O. Box 456
1800 Argyle Street
Halifax, NS B3J 3S9

Dear Minister Paris:

Thank you for meeting with us today.

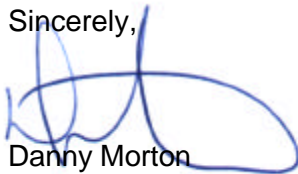
TIANS appreciates and supports the government's interest in investigating viable access into Nova Scotia, however, we are extremely concerned about the cancellation of service for 2010 and the immediate and long-term impact on the tourism industry. As indicated in our December 21st, 2009 letter to Premier Dexter, TIANS firmly supports access into Southwest Nova Scotia from the United States.

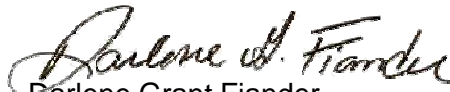
We understand that your government is waiting for the transportation research, currently underway, to address long term opportunities to improve access. Faced with the dramatic impact the lack of service will have for the 2010 tourism year we strongly support a temporary solution that will allow for the proper review and long range planning required around this important transportation issue.

We respectfully request, that in your role as Minister of Tourism, you expedite a meeting with the federal government and the appropriate provincial and municipal agencies to come up with a temporary solution for 2010 that would assure access into Southwestern Nova Scotia. This would provide an opportunity for the thoughtful review required for any substantive changes to future service and to mitigate economic losses.

On behalf of the tourism industry we look forward to your leadership on this issue and await a response.

Sincerely,


Danny Morton
Chair, TIANS


Darlene Grant Fiander
President, TIANS

cc Premier Darrell Dexter
Regional Tourism Industry Associations (RTIA's)
TIANS Board



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TIANS Requests Tourism Minister seek Solution for 2010 Ferry Service

HALIFAX, NS (January 13th, 2010) On Tuesday, January 12, 2010, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) formally requested the Minister of Tourism initiate discussions with the federal government and other stakeholders to find a temporary solution for ferry service into Southwest Nova Scotia.

“While TIANS supports the government’s interest in investigating viable and sustainable access into Nova Scotia, we are extremely concerned about the cancellation of service for 2010 and the immediate and long-term impact on the tourism industry,” says Danny Morton, Chair of TIANS.

“TIANS has requested that Tourism Minister, Percy Paris, expedite a meeting with the federal government and the appropriate provincial and municipal agencies to come up with a temporary solution for 2010 that would assure access into Southwestern Nova Scotia. TIANS believes this would allow for a more strategic approach on transportation access, provide an opportunity for a thoughtful review of pending research and mitigate the significant economic losses that will result without any service,” says Morton.

Access from the United States into Southwest Nova Scotia has long served as a key entry into the province and is a gateway for Atlantic Canada. “Although we have seen declining numbers over the past few years for a number of reasons, the US market is still one of our greatest opportunities for growing the visitor economy,” says Darlene Grant Fiander, President of TIANS. TIANS has support on this issue from the Atlantic Canada Tourism Caucus, which represents over 3,000 tourism operators in the four Atlantic Canadian Provinces.

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THE NUMBERS DO MATTER
January 9th, 2010 - The Chronicle Herald

Transportation infrastructure plays a critical role in Nova Scotia's Tourism Industry. Air, rail, ground and water are all essential modes of transportation for access into the province.

The recent announcement regarding the cancellation of ferry service into southwest Nova Scotia highlights the lack of a strategic transportation policy in the province. Nova Scotia's ability to develop tourism and trade continues to be vulnerable as we struggle to have secure and viable access points.

The fact that no clear business case could be articulated around the economic implications along with the decision of having no ferry service highlights an even greater issue regarding the role of tourism and its place as a significant sector in the provincial economy.

The United States has been a primary market and continues to hold tremendous potential for Nova Scotia. The decline in visitors over the past few years can be attributed to many global factors, however it should be highlighted that almost 80,000 people still entered the province in 2009 via this route and this resulted in over 33 million dollars in revenue last year. The broader impact of jobs and investment from employees and suppliers has yet to be quantified, but estimates from the region put job losses in the hundreds, resulting in millions more in lost tax revenue.

Nova Scotia is spending millions to attract people to the province and at the same time making it much harder to get here. Tourism revenue last year was 1.3 billion dollars and the tourism industry employs 40,000 Nova Scotians. TIANS strongly supports responsible investment; a strategic review of ferry service and its importance to accessing markets would be most welcome. In the meantime, reducing access to the province, without any consultation or a plan to improve our ability to bring in visitors and enhance trade, is simply bad business.

The infrastructure required to get people into Nova Scotia and move trade is crucial to our long term prosperity. We need a model for inter-modal travel that will best serve visitors to our province and grow tourism receipts. The condition of our roads, our signage policies, our ability to take advantage of open-skies agreements by attracting new airlines, and our use of rail and ferry access are all part of a broader transportation discussion that should be taking place in support of Nova Scotia's tourism industry.

The numbers do matter.