Beat: Travel

CAT Ferry Passenger Numbers Released

For May 19th to June 16th, 2022

Halifax, Canada, 19.06.2022, 01:44 Time

USPA NEWS - In a news release Friday, the Nova Scotia Public Works Minister, Kim Masland, released the passenger numbers for the first month of the CAT Ferry service which operates between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and Bar Harbor, Maine. As previously reported by USPA News, the international CAT Ferry season commenced on May 19th after a 3 year hiatus.

In 2019, service had to be suspended due to major upgrades that were needed to the terminal in Bar Harbor.
In 2020 and 2021 the COVID-19 pandemic forced the service to be suspended due to border restrictions.

Bay Ferries Limited has reported that on the 16 days of operation between May 19th and June 16th, 1,661 passengers and 762 vehicles sailed from Bar Harbor to Yarmouth, while 1,127 passengers and 561 vehicles travelled from Yarmouth to Bar Harbor.
It should be noted that Bay Ferries released a statement on June 7th stating that it has sold over 15,000 passenger tickets, which was typical for this time of year before the pandemic. It did indicate that many of those tickets sold are for sailings during the months of July and August.

Public Works Minister, Kim Masland said, " Our government feels very strongly that Bay Ferries owes it to Nova Scotians to be fully transparent about how the service is performing." She went on to say, “We have requested that the operator provide daily updates on its website going forward, but the operator has declined. If Bay Ferries will not be fully transparent, we certainly will be."
Thursday evening Bay Ferries Limited said in an email to the Department of Public Works, " It was concerned about releasing early numbers because the company is in a "rebuild mode" and didn't want early-season data to be misinterpreted as indicative of overall prospects."

The email from Bay Ferries Limited went on to say, "That said, if shorter-term reporting on actual passenger and vehicle traffic is a priority, we will work with your department to develop a reporting structure which addresses this need in some reasonable fashion. We are hoping to give the service its best chance of success in this ever-changing economic environment but also respect the needs and priorities of the government."

From May 19th, until June 20th there will be sailings on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday From June 23rd to September 6th there will be sailings 7 days a week, and from September 7th to October 10th there will be sailings on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All Yarmouth departures are at 9:30 am. (Atlantic Standard Time) The Bar Harbor sailing schedule is the same, but the U.S. departure time is 3:00 pm. (Eastern Standard Time)

Nova Scotia taxpayers are anxiously awaiting future updates that will show steady growth and economic benefits from the international CAT Ferry service. After all, millions of Nova Scotia tax dollars have been spent to fund this service which has so much potential for tourism on both sides of the border.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21071/cat-ferry-passenger-numbers-released.html

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