



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO  
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA  
Thursday, September 18, 2025**

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**ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

**Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - Request to  
Designate Inland Ferries as Essential Services**

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**ADJOURNMENT**



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors Supplementary

**To:** Chair and Board  
**From:** Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services  
**Date:** September 18, 2025  
**Subject:** Request to Designate Inland Ferries as Essential Services

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**RECOMMENDATION:** (all/directors/majority)

That the Board approve the letter to Premier Eby, Minister Farnworth, and Minister Whiteside regarding Inland Ferries as Essential Services.

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**BACKGROUND**

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Earlier this year, the Harrop Procter Ferry Committee Society provided information to the RDBN Board with a request to submit a resolution to the North Central Local Government Association regarding Essential Service Levels of Inland Ferries. The Board submitted the resolution which will be considered at the upcoming UBCM Convention.

Subsequently, the Harrop Procter Ferry Committee Society, along with local governments, MLAs, and First Nations, virtually met with the Honourable Brittney Anderson, Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities to address the need for inland ferries to be designated an essential service. All meeting participants were encouraged to write letters to the Province.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Letter
2. Resolution

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This topic aligns with the following Strategic Focus Area(s) from the RDBN Strategic Plan:  
2. Advocacy with the Province

September 15, 2025

Honourable David Eby  
Premier  
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Honourable Mike Farnworth  
Minister of Transportation and Transit  
PO Box 9055 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside  
Minister of Labour  
PO Box 9064, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Premier Eby, Minister Farnworth and Minister Whiteside,

**Re: Request to Designate Inland Ferries as Essential Services**

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, together with Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Nee Tahi Buhn Band, are writing jointly to call on the Province of British Columbia to formally designate inland ferries as essential services.

Inland ferries are the only reliable transportation links for many rural and First Nations communities, supporting residents, agriculture, resource extraction, recreation, and industry. They also ensure that northern and rural regions can continue to provide the resources and economic benefits that are vital to the province. Despite their importance, inland ferries are not currently recognized as an essential service.

During the 2018 wildfires, the Francois Forester Ferry at Francois Lake was the only means of evacuation and emergency access when surrounding roads were blocked. That experience is a prime example of why inland ferry service must be deemed essential.

To address this issue, we are requesting that the Province amend the *Transportation Act* to codify inland ferries as essential services, equivalent to highways and bridges, necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of British Columbia. This would treat inland ferries the same as coastal ferries as provided for in section 25 of the *Coastal Ferry Act*.

We are also asking the Province to consider amending the *Labour Relations Code* to ensure that communities directly affected by ferry disruptions have the ability to participate in Labour Relations Board processes, so that the impacts on public safety and community welfare are fully considered during labour disputes.

These changes will ensure the continued operation of inland ferries, including the ferry at Francois Lake, which is vital to both community safety and the provincial economy. This will also demonstrate the Province's commitment to reconciliation by ensuring First Nations and local governments have a clear voice in protecting the infrastructure that sustains our people and our economies.

We respectfully ask for your support and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Yours truly,

Mark Parker, Chair  
RDBN

Janet Whitford, Chief  
Cheslatta Carrier Nation

Marcella Morris, Chief  
Nee Tahi Buhn Band

cc: The Honourable Brittny Anderson, Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities

**Essential Service Levels of Inland Ferries****Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako**

**Whereas** Inland Ferries provide historically critical infrastructure to the communities served, equivalent to roads, highways and bridges;

**And Whereas** Inland Ferry services are essential services whose costs are funded by a portion of the taxes on sales of gasoline and diesel;

**Therefore Be it Resolved** that all Inland Ferries are entitled to the same legal status as roads, highways and bridges, that all remain toll-free, and that the regular schedule of each Inland Ferry (whether on-demand or set schedule) be deemed the minimum necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the communities served.