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## **Fare hikes, cut-off times, and commuter cards prompt ferry petition**

A petition to BC Ferries has been initiated on Quadra Island (see page 1 for related story). The petition states:

‘Those of us who live on the smaller coast islands have several serious concerns about the direction that the BC Ferry Corporation is taking. Your mandate is to serve our communities and yet we are not listened to.

1. Cut-off times may work for the bigger ferries but definitely are not necessary for the smaller routes. Will you sail with partially empty boats and force passengers to wait just because they couldn't make it through the ticket booth? To remove the discretion of the captains about when they know it is safe to sail is unsupportable.

2. The proposal to replace paper commuter tickets with plastic cards is seen by most as a simple cash grab. If plastic cards are brought in, they will cause hardship to families

having to buy multiple cards, make it difficult for those of us who travel irregularly, cost more for repair and for other businesses coming to the Islands, and create a lot of logistic problems for ferry workers. The fact that there will be no refunds for unused portions adds insult to injury.

3. Fares have risen 17% over the past five months, 38% in three years. Increases of this kind threaten the viability of ferry dependent communities like ours as they impact not just individuals travelling to work and recreation but raise the cost of doing any kind of business on the Islands. Tourism BC is spending millions of dollars to promote Vancouver Island and the smaller Islands but if ferry fares remain so high, tourists will not want to come.’

The petition can be accessed online: [www.ipetitions.com/campaigns/Quadra\\_island\\_bc\\_ferries/](http://www.ipetitions.com/campaigns/Quadra_island_bc_ferries/).

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