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### Mayor Calls on Province to Rethink Decision to Exclude Sunshine Coast Ferries from Travel Ban

*April 27, 2021* – Town of Gibsons' Mayor Bill Beamish spoke out today against the Province's decision to exclude ferries sailing to Sunshine Coast communities from the recently announced travel restrictions.

On April 23, 2021, BC Ferries announced that, in support of provincial travel restrictions Order M172, it would deny service to customers travelling for non-essential reasons between routes that connect different regional zones, as defined by the order. This would include denying ferry transport to people in recreational vehicles.

However, because the Sunshine Coast belongs to the same regional zone as the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, BC Ferries will not be applying the same rules to travellers on the Horseshoe Bay-Langdale route or the Earls Cove-Salter Bay route. Non-essential travel within the order's regional zones is discouraged, but not banned.

*"During the past year, a large majority of Sunshine Coast citizens have stringently followed the health guidelines and orders announced by Provincial Health Officer Bonnie Henry,"* said Mayor Beamish. *"As a result, we have succeeded in keeping the number of positive COVID-19 infections in our community to a minimum."*

*"With this newest order, the Sunshine Coast is folded into a large geographic region that contains millions of people and some of the province's worst-hit areas. We think this is extremely unfair, as it leaves us – and by extension, our already-stressed healthcare workers – vulnerable to folks who will be tempted to take advantage of more lax travel restrictions on Sunshine Coast ferries."*

*"Today, we call on Mike Farnworth to rethink the decision not to ban non-essential travel on our local ferry routes. We also respectfully urge anyone who is considering travelling to the Sunshine Coast for a non-essential reason to wait until the provincial travel restrictions are lifted. Now is not the time to visit."*

Order M172 will remain in effect until after the Victoria Day long weekend, which is normally an extremely busy time at BC's ferry terminals.

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For more information, please contact:

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*"Nature is our most valuable asset"*