

Beat: Travel

Premier Tim Houston Disappointed

With Uptake On CAT Ferry In 2022

Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, 09.10.2022, 20:36 Time

USPA NEWS - On May 19, for the first time in three years, the CAT Ferry departed Yarmouth, Nova Scotia sailing to Bar Harbor, Maine. In 2019, the international ferry service was suspended because the ferry terminal in Bar Harbor needed major upgrades. In 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of the ferry service due to border restrictions. This chain of unfortunate events caused much financial hardship on the economy in the region and in the tourism industry across the province.

At the beginning of the 2022 CAT Ferry season, I had a chance to explore the downtown area of Yarmouth and I could see the optimism, enthusiasm and hope in the eyes of the residents in this southwestern community that greatly depends on tourism. The resumption of ferry service would mean many shop owners could reopen and hire employees, many food service providers would welcome hungry tourists, and inn-keepers, bed and breakfasts, and hotels operators would once again provide world class accommodations.

With the CAT departing in the morning and arriving in the early evening, it makes Yarmouth an attractive and convenient community to commence or conclude the CAT Ferry adventure.

With the absence of the CAT Ferry service for the past several years and the 2022 season not living up to the expectations of many, it is no secret that Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston is not a fan of the CAT Ferry.

In a statement to the media back in September, the Premier said, "I certainly am absolutely disappointed with the numbers. Nova Scotia tax payers have invested a significant amount in the operation over the last number of years and I think every Nova Scotian should be disappointed with the uptake on the service."

Premier Houston indicated that the CAT Ferry would be reviewed at the end of the 2022 season and said that all options will be on the table including early termination of the province's contract with Bay Ferries Limited.

The Premier went on to say, "There's been no decision made of course. We want the season to finish, we want all the facts and we want to have a number of discussions with a number of people. We'll look at the final numbers and make some decisions based on that."

As the future of the Nova Scotia to Maine ferry service seems to be uncertain based on statements made by the Houston government, many Yarmouth business owners are now uneasy about any further hiring, renovations or expansion for fear of the CAT Ferry not returning after the conclusion of the 2022 season.

Rick Allwright, the executive director of the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce said, "It takes very little to scare the community at this point based on our experiences."

Liberal party leader and Yarmouth MLA Zach Churchill, is mystified by the fact that the Houston government is mentioning the possibility of terminating the CAT service before the end of the first pandemic recovery season. Churchill said, "I hope this is just posturing, but the fact the premier and minister both came out and said the same thing about being very disappointed with the numbers ... we're just coming out of a pandemic, the ferry has been gone for three years, we're in a new market and we're projected to be over 40,000 guests and they're disappointed with those numbers?"

Even though the future remains uncertain for the CAT Ferry, what is certain is that there are many different opinions as to the government funding this international ferry service.

The CAT Ferry 2022 season concluded on October 10th and USPA News will continue to provide coverage on this developing story.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21695/premier-tim-houston-disappointed.html>

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