

November 4, 2013

Craig Sams P.E.
0694 Narragansett Ave.
Prudence Island, RI 02872

RECEIVED

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Luly Massaro, Clerk
Division of Public Utilities and Carriers
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

RE: DPUC Docket No. D-13-105; Prudence Island Ferry

To whom it may concern:

As a resident of Prudence Island I have been watching closely, as others have too, the continuing saga of the Prudence Island Ferry. When I first heard that the ferry was going to discontinue providing service to the island I was concerned on many levels, the first of which was how do I get to my home on the island? The owner of the ferry has since retracted that statement; however this has not left a good feeling about having that threat return at any time.

I have some level of professional knowledge of the infrastructure of ferry terminals as I am employed as a professional engineer (RI # 5243) in the business of inspecting and designing marine structures including ferry terminals. One of my concerns based on observation of the terminal facilities both in Bristol and Prudence Island is that these facilities, including the transfer bridges and breasting dolphins, appear to be at the end of their service life. While I am not privy to the current owners' maintenance schedule or their plans for eventual replacement, it is apparent that there is great potential for interruption of service if there was a malfunction of either of these facilities. I should note that the captains and crew that operate the ferry are second to none and if it were not for their skill I believe that both terminals would incur damage on a regular basis.

One of the other concerns that I have is the level of maintenance being provided for the existing vessels. During the summer of 2012 the ferry boat Mt. Mansfield was taken out of service at the height of the summer season for Coast Guard Certification. The backup ferry was used but there was a significant reduction in capacity. It seems that there was some level of lack of planning in that this activity could have been accomplished in the winter when the demand for service is lower.

I have had discussions with A&R Marine regarding the plans for new terminal facilities and provided some assistance in planning and construction costing related to new structures. I feel that they have taken the right approach for a long term solution to providing ferry service and upgrading terminal facilities. I believe that their cost projections are valid and that they are willing to make the long term commitment needed to continue ferry service between Prudence Island and Bristol well into the future.

All in all I am concerned that the current operator could end service to the island on a whim and leave Islanders scrambling to survive. I also believe that ferry service between Prudence Island and Fall River is not practical, will be more expensive and will be much more time consuming than the existing run to Bristol. I believe that A&R Marine has fully committed to providing long term ferry service to the island and will be an overall benefit to the public.

Thank you for your consideration on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig D Sams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "C" and "S".

Craig Sams