



TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS

Post Office Box 1327 • Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
Telephone 508-693-3554 • Fax 508-696-7736

Select Board

Brian C. Packish, *Chair*
Jason M. Balboni
Gail M. Barmakian
Emma Green-Beach
Ryan P. Ruley

Deborah Potter, C.G.A.
Town Administrator/Accountant

April 20, 2022

Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and
Nantucket Steamship Authority Board
PO Box 284
Woods Hole, MA 02543

Moira E. Tierney, *Chair*
Robert F. Ranney, *Vice Chair*
Robert R. Jones, *Secretary*
James M. Malkin
Peter J. Jeffrey

RE: Potential Reduction in Ferry Service to the Island of Martha's Vineyard

Honorable Members of the Board:

The Select Board of the Town of Oak Bluffs has been informed that the Steamship Authority Board may be entertaining a request to reduce service to the Island of Martha's Vineyard by eliminating the 5:30 A.M. ferry. At their special meeting of April 15, the Select Board voted to oppose this measure in the strongest possible manner through a correspondence to your Board and urge you to reject this reduction in service.

The Board knows that you are keenly aware of the importance of the ferry service which provides a lifeline for our Island communities. Many others simply don't understand or appreciate the enormous negative impact that such a reduction in service would have on our local residents. First and foremost, we rely extensively on the Steamship ferry service to be able to access medical services and get to doctor's appointments. It is often an all-day affair to be able to get to a doctor's appointment, receive chemotherapy or any other deeply needed medical services. Often the 5:30 A.M boat is the only means to get up to the city on time for appointments the same day. Can you imagine having to take two days and stay in an expensive hotel just to see your doctor or receive medical treatment? That is what such a change means for us.

Another critical issue deals with the delivery of food and other supplies which require the early boat to be able to unload critical supplies at various business locations in the Town at reasonable times in the morning to avoid complete gridlock on our local roads. Later boats mean later deliveries during times when our narrow roads are packed with traffic. The geometry simply does not exist to accommodate food deliveries, local traffic and visitor traffic at the same time. It creates complete chaos and shuts our business districts down. We rely on the 5:30 A.M. boat during the summer and shoulder seasons to accommodate the flow of goods and traffic that we need to service our local and visiting populations.



TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS

Post Office Box 1327 • Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
Telephone 508-693-3554 • Fax 508-696-7736

Select Board

Brian C. Packish, *Chair*
Jason M. Balboni
Gail M. Barmakian
Emma Green-Beach
Ryan P. Ruley

Deborah Potter, C.G.A.
Town Administrator/Accountant

Available space on the current ferry service schedule is already very limited during the busy summer months, and the 5:30 A.M. ferries currently offer an extremely limited number of trips. We hope to work with the Authority to increase our level of services as local residents needs often get lost in the summer trade. To eliminate the service would be an unthinkable detriment to our community, and a measure that we hope you will join us in opposing.

In closing we wish to thank the Steamship Authority for your efforts during the recent busy summer period to meet our critical needs. We hope that we may continue to work with you as strong advocates for our community members who rely entirely on the Steamship service to meet their daily critical needs and we look forward to your support for service improvements rather than a dismantling of these essential public services.

Respectfully,

Brian Packish, Chair
Oak Bluffs Select Board

cc: Select Board Town of Aquinnah
Select Board Town of Chilmark
Select Board Town of Edgartown
Select Board Town of Tisbury
Select Board Town of West Tisbury
Select Board Town of Nantucket
Dukes County Commissioners
Senator Julian Cyr
Representative Dylan Fernandes
John Cahill, Port Council Chairman
Joe Sollitto, Oak Bluffs Port Council Representative
Robert B. Davis, General Manager