

Dear Governor Baker

We write in support of the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority's request for urgent financial assistance, which was communicated to you in a letter dated April 16, 2020. Due to the plummeting revenues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SSA forecasts it will be out of funds no later than May 31, 2020. This is of greatest concern to us as our town, and our entire island, have no alternative to the SSA for the transport of essential supplies – food, medicine, fuel, and the movement of emergency and medical personnel.

The SSA has been able to operate since 1962 without asking for assistance from the Commonwealth. Our towns and our island economy have been hoping that the COVID-19 pandemic would moderate in time to allow summer bookings and revenues to present for a somewhat “normal” summer; however, we cannot assume with any confidence that will be the case. We are now facing the worst-case scenario – a dismal summer economy and, even worse for all the island's population, a ferry service without the cash to operate.

We strongly urge you to do everything possible to provide support to the Steamship Authority so it can continue to provide for our needs to transport essential goods and services to the island of Martha's Vineyard.