

TO: Casco Bay Lines Board of Directors

FROM: Ben Dinsmore, GM

DATE: Aug 26, 2026

RE: August Update

As the peak summer tourist season winds down, I want to thank our staff and crew for the professionalism and hard work they showed through the busiest months of the year. They moved an enormous number of passengers, vehicles and freight while keeping service safe and reliable. We now welcome our late summer and fall visitors, along with the return of the school-year routine for our island communities. The report below covers where things stand across our major projects and day-to-day operations.

Winter Schedule:

During the Operations Committee meeting, staff were asked to provide a cost estimate for moving the start of the spring schedule forward from the weekend of Memorial Day to the middle of April when ticket prices change. This would mean starting the spring schedule approximately 5 weeks or 35 days sooner. Here’s a breakdown of the 5 runs affected by the schedule change and how much extra each of the runs would cost:

Cost of Starting the Spring Schedule Earlier

Five-week advance to mid-April, coinciding with the ticket price change

● Peaks Island	\$4,129	● Down Bay	\$17,356
One extra morning car ferry trip daily	\$1,842	8:00 AM boat on weekends	\$5,468
Fuel savings only. Crew is still here over 35 days.		Fuel and labor savings over 10 days.	
Evening car service Wed, Thurs, Sunday	\$2,287	6:00 PM LD / GD / DC run	\$8,643
Saves the lead deckhand on 7:15pm, 8:15pm, 9:15pm, and 10:30pm trips. Boat is still running (Maquoit), so minimal fuel savings over 15 days.		Fuel and labor savings over 35 days.	
		8:30 PM stop at Diamond Cove	\$3,245
		Fuel and labor savings over 35 days.	

Total cost of the five-week advance	\$21,485
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Battery Steele:

Senesco and the engineering team have identified solutions for both the Gross Tonnage issue (the volume measurement of the vessel) as well as the ballast issue (the actual weight of the vessel) that I mentioned in last month's GM report.

The yard is currently modifying the openings in the walls (bulkheads) where piping and electrical wiring pass through thus allowing the vessel to remain in specification to receive volumetric exemptions to stay within it's 100 gross ton rating. This work is well underway and should hopefully be done within the next 2-3 weeks.

The engineering team has also finished a new stability test of the vessel and is finalizing how much additional weight needs to be added to the vessel so that it sits at the optimal depth in the water. This involves designing and fabricating racks deep inside the vessel (in the bilge area) and then filling the racks with some sort of weight (typically lead or cement). This could take anywhere from 4-6 weeks.

Though relatively minor compared to those above, there are a few typical "punch list" items staff and engineering are also working with the yard to resolve.

Down Bay Vessel Replacement:

During the operations committee a representative from Bristol Harbor Group provided an update on the final design of the down bay replacement vessel. Bid proposals for the integrator RFP were due Wednesday (8/26) and members of the advisory committee have begun evaluating the proposal. Once an integrator is selected, Bristol Harbor will have additional analysis and design work prior to the next vessel advisory committee meeting to discuss decision points.

On Time Performance:

Staff have been working with the City of Portland regarding the assessment of on-time performance of the region's public transportation system. As part of this process, we prepared a presentation that looks at on-time performance of Casco Bay Line vessels as a whole and then by various routes. This presentation was shared during the Operations Committee. One of the interesting findings is how the down bay vessel, particularly the 08:00am and 12:00pm, have a hard time keeping their schedule in the summer months. This ties in with the [freight evaluation analysis](#) we did a few months back showing that down bay freight has increased significantly over the last 3 years and the schedule is likely too tight. You can read the presentation [here](#). The presentation explains the criteria for considering whether a vessel is considered "on time" and there was some discussion on whether the grace periods used were appropriate.

Freight Performance/Reliability:

Board members have raised concerns regarding freight deliveries being delayed or routed to the wrong island. While many of these issues are related to delivery trucks not arriving on time, or shipments not having the correct labels, there are clearly instances when there is a breakdown in communication between our team. I've instructed staff to look into improved systems and methods for handling specific freight requests.

Terminal/Wharfs:

As usual this time of year, the terminal's public restrooms experience heavy use from both passengers and the public. Staff continue to work with our janitorial service provider to optimize cleaning times while recognizing that round-the-clock coverage is not financially viable.

Staff are also working with our security services provider to optimize personnel in a way that balances safety and financial responsibility.

We've seen an improvement in the cleanliness of the Peaks Island terminal which has also resulted in fewer comments from passengers. The most efficient channel for any issues regarding trash containers or general cleanliness at the Peaks Island Pier is to contact CBL directly by phone or email comment@cascobaylines.com or email me directly at bend@cascobaylines.com.

As mentioned in previous reports, MaineDOT is still planning on painting the Peaks Island terminal sometime this fall or winter. At this month's Operations Committee meeting we discussed that vehicle service during this work would need to be provided by LPA and the State's budget may only allow for 3-4 vehicle trips per day.

Staff is working to support Long Island with the design and engineering of a wave break and wave screen on the Long Island wharf, as well as supporting the MaineDOT with their design and engineering of the Cliff Wharf.

Website Updates:

As a reminder, we've introduced a new "Community Hub" page on our website that provides quick links to frequently requested information, reports, and items of interest. This month we've added a new Finance Committee Meeting Timeline which includes summaries and presentation materials from various Finance Committee meetings, workshops, as well as board meetings where the Board acted on the committee's recommendations. You'll also find links to various projects and initiatives including Rate

Change, Schedule Changes, E-Ticketing, Batty Steele Updates, and the new “General Manager’s” page with links to previous Monthly GM reports.

There’s a link to the “Community Hub” on the top right corner of the homepage in the menu bar outlined in the red box below:



New CBL Pass and Ticket Assistance Programs:

Peaks Island Tax and Energy Assistance (PITEA) has launched its new CBL Pass Assistance program that provides support to low- and moderate-income Peaks Island Residents who may have been adversely affected by recent changes in CBL’s rate structure. This program is funded with an initial grant of \$4,000 from CBL with a commitment that CBL will provide additional support if needed to ensure the intent of the program.

CBL further understands that the Peaks Island Council has voted to transfer administration of its separate needs-based ferry assistance program to PITEA for FY 2027, allocating \$2,500 from its budget to this initiative. That program is funded and directed by the Peaks Island Council, and the District understands that single-use tickets offered pursuant to this PIC funding are currently distributed at the Peaks Island Food Pantry.

If you’re aware of anyone who may benefit from either of these two separate programs, please have them reach out to PITEA.

As always, I welcome any questions or feedback from the board. Thank you for your continued support.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian A. Dwyer".