

TO: Casco Bay Lines Board of Directors

FROM: Ben Dinsmore, GM

DATE: Oct 29, 2026

RE: October Update

Dear Board,

Here is October's GM report.

Freight Rates:

The Finance Committee has held two additional freight rate workshops since the last Board meeting. The first was September 29th, the second was October 6th. The latest meeting included in-depth discussions on heating fuel, building supplies, and down bay vehicles. The latest proposal, presentation and public comments can be found on the [Finance Committee Meetings](#) page on the Community Hub. You can also view them by clicking on these links:

[October 6th Presentation](#)

[Public Comments Received through October 5](#)

Battery Steele:

Work on the Battery Steele's ballast issue has been delayed as the parties involved discuss cost and responsibility of the remedy. We expect to have a clearer picture of the path forward within another week or two, but as for now, delivery of the vessel is delayed until at least December.

Security Details:

On Tuesday, October 27, a team of uniformed federal officers was present at the Casco Bay Lines terminal. Several passengers have asked who they were and why they were there.

The officers were a TSA Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response team, commonly called VIPR. These teams are part of the Transportation Security Administration, the same agency that screens passengers at the Portland Jetport. Congress authorized TSA to deploy VIPR teams to any mode of transportation anywhere in the country, including ferries, trains,

and buses. The teams typically include TSA inspectors, Federal Air Marshals, and explosive-detection canine handlers. Their purpose is to provide a visible security presence at transportation hubs and to deter threats to passengers and infrastructure.

VIPR teams are not Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They do not conduct immigration enforcement, and they are not at the terminal to check anyone's identity or status. Their work is focused on the safety of the transportation system itself.

TSA visits the Casco Bay Lines terminal periodically as part of its regular rotation through transportation facilities in Maine. The timing and frequency of those visits are decided by TSA under federal law. Casco Bay Lines does not request these visits, does not schedule them, and does not have the authority to decline them. Our role is to cooperate with federal security operations so that service continues without disruption, and to make sure our passengers are treated with courtesy.

We understand that the sight of uniformed federal officers can be unsettling, and that for some passengers it brings to mind concerns that have nothing to do with ferry security. We take that seriously. We will continue to ask TSA for advance notice of visits where possible so we can keep our staff informed and able to answer questions. If you have concerns about a VIPR visit, you can contact TSA directly through tsa.gov or feel free to reach out to me directly bend@cascobaylines.com.

Our staff work hard to keep the terminal welcoming for everyone who rides with us. We ask passengers to treat them with the same courtesy they extend to you, especially when they are answering questions about matters outside their control.

Down Bay Vessel:

Bristol Harbor Group will be attending the next Operations Committee meeting to give an update on the design of the new Down Bay Vessel. Staff has selected an Integrator among the 6 firms that submitted proposals for the vessel's propulsion and electrical equipment. The winning bidder was ABB.

MaineDOT/Peaks Transfer Bridge:

MaineDOT has sent notice they will start the Peaks Island ramp work on March 8th, 2027. As mentioned previously, the state has budgeted up to \$100,000 to cover barge service over this period, which is expected to be 30 days.

Vessel Drydocks:

Bay Mist: The Bay Mist is scheduled for drydock in December. Rockland Marine won the bid and the vessel will be serviced in Rockland.

Machigonne: The Machigonne is schedule for drydock in February. We are trying to coordinate this with the MaineDOT's work on the transfer bridge to make the most efficient use of supplemental barge service fees in the event the Battery Steele is not in service. RFPs are due on October 29th and the winning shipyard will be announced shortly after.

Aucocisco: The Aucosisco is scheduled for dry dock at the end of March/early April. The RFP is currently being prepared for this work.

New Text Alert Program:

The District will be switching over to a new Text Alert provider starting in November. Our long-term provider has been bought by another company and they will no longer support our current system. We will be importing existing customers over to the new system and will be sending out additional information over the next week or two to ensure help ensure the transition goes as smoothly as possible.

Sleigh Mist/Holiday Cruises:

The District will be adding another holiday cruise to this year continuing the initial success of last year's holiday cruises. More details will be coming in the next few weeks.

2027 Budget Planning:

The end of September also brought the close of the 2026 fiscal year. As we look ahead to 2027, I will be looking for the board's feedback on initiatives that will require financial support to incorporate into the budget. Items may include an independent schedule analysis, and independent freight handling analysis, E-ticketing, etc.

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 D. [unclear]", with a stylized flourish at the end.