

TO: Casco Bay Lines Board of Directors

FROM: Ben Dinsmore, GM

DATE: Sep 24, 2026

RE: September Update

This month marks my first year as General Manager of Casco Bay Lines. It has been a rewarding year. The work is challenging and the priorities often compete, but it has been a privilege to work alongside a dedicated staff and crew, a committed Board, and island communities who care deeply about this service. I have learned a great deal from all of you, and I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me.

That dedication was on clear display on the evening of August 27th, when a fatal police-involved shooting occurred on CBL property at the Portland terminal. Thankfully, no employees, passengers, or bystanders were hurt. Staff acted quickly to move passengers to a secure area, and their calm, professional response kept people out of harm's way. We also recognize that this was a traumatic event and that people process it differently. The morning after the incident, I reached out to all staff to encourage them to talk with me, their supervisor, or HR, and to remind them of our free and confidential Employee Assistance Program. We remain mindful of how this event has affected our staff, our crews, and the wider Casco Bay community. More detail on the response and our follow-up is included in the Training section below.

Freight Rate Proposal:

A new freight proposal was introduced at the September 16th, 2026, Finance Committee meeting. The proposal includes background on how freight costs were calculated and how freight revenue only covered 38% of costs at 2025 levels. The proposal also forecasts significant cost increases in 2027, 2028 and 2029 driven in large part by higher fuel prices, staff commitments, and insurance premiums. The proposed rates are then compared to inflation in the wider freight transportation industry over the last 20 years, the same duration CBL will have gone without a change if the proposal is fully implemented. Please review the proposal ([link here](#)) and forward it along to your constituents for their comments as well. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, comments, or

concerns with the proposal and encourage your constituents to do the same. They can also contact me directly at bend@cascobaylines.com or ratechange@cascobaylines.com.

Peaks Island Trash:

We've streamlined the process for reporting overflowing trash bins on Peaks. Posters are now displayed at the Peaks Island waiting area with a QR code that links directly to a simple trash report form that users can complete in a few seconds. On submission, the report is instantly forwarded to CBL management so the issue can be dealt with. Some of the signs have already been vandalized and we are taking steps to address the issue.

Battery Steele:

As discussed at last month's Board meeting, the shipyard is addressing the issues with the vessel's tonnage certification and ballast. The tonnage certification work has been completed and is awaiting approval by ABS and the USCG. Work on the ballast issue continues, the engineering design to add the weights is now complete and the shipyard is in the process of fabricating the brackets where the lead ingots will be installed. Delivery of the vessel is now projected to be sometime in November provided the ballasting installation goes well and no new issues develop during the final sea trials and inspection.

Reimagining Franklin Street (Portland, ME):

The City of Portland has released its draft concept plan for the Reimagining Franklin Street project, which covers the corridor from I-295 to Commercial Street. The plan removes the existing median, adds sidewalks and bike lanes the full length of the street, reconnects several cross streets, and reduces Franklin from two travel lanes to one in each direction between Congress Street and Commercial Street, with on-street parking added along that stretch. The draft is available at reimaginingfranklin.me, and the public comment period closes on September 25. Board members who wish to comment can do so through the project website or by email to franklinstreet@portlandmaine.gov. I have reviewed the proposal and submitted comments raising concerns about potential congestion in the southbound direction between Congress and Commercial, where the road narrows from two lanes to one on the approach to the terminal. The plan is expected to go before the City Council this fall, which will provide another opportunity for public input.

Complete Sailing Schedule Review:

There was constructive discussion during the Operations Committee regarding a thorough review of CBL's full sailing schedule across all seasons. The most important takeaway for me was the suggestion to have the full Board involved in developing the goals and guardrails of the project. This will prevent staff, Board members, and possible external

consultants from allocating time and resources only to be told later that certain concepts are non-starters.

At a minimum, the goals and limits of a schedule review should answer the following questions:

Purpose: Why are we looking at the schedule?

- If it's to save money, what is the savings goal?
- If it's to improve service, including inter-island service, how much more service should be added, and to which islands?
- If it's to improve on-time performance, how should "on time" be defined, and should the definition differ for Down Bay and Peaks trips?
- Are there other reasons for reviewing the schedule?

Priorities:

- If there is more than one goal from above, how should they be ranked or prioritized?

Limits: What is off the table?

- Previous concepts and proposals have been declared out of bounds. Which routes or vessels should the analysis treat as off limits for schedule changes, vessel speed adjustments, rerouting, or other changes?

These are just a few of the goal and limit discussions that would greatly improve the outcome of any schedule review and proposal.

Training:

I want to recognize the heroic action and professionalism of staff during the police involved shooting at the Portland terminal on the evening of August 27th. Our very proactive staff gathered people who were waiting in the lobby area and ushered them to a secure area where they would be better protected from the situation. At the same time, an inbound vessel was held off on its approach to the terminal until police had secured the area. An after-action review of the incident was conducted by staff and lessons learned and key findings have been updated in our training material as well as our vessel and port security plans.

Management has produced a new training matrix for the Battery Steele and plans are in place to begin staff training once the vessel arrives.

New CBL Pass and Ticket Assistance Programs:

Peaks Island Tax and Energy Assistance's (PITEA) new CBL Pass Assistance program has now been in place for over a month. This program 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 "Ben A. Davis", with a stylized flourish at the end.