

## Public Comments Regarding Proposed Rate Adjustments

3/10/2026

To Whom It May Concern:

As a year round Peaks Island resident since 2005, I feel the need to reach out to express my concerns about pricing as follows:

My grown children used to come to the Island for dinner and regular visits with my grandchildren. Now I go to Portland to see them. It has become costly for family get togethers. By the time you pay for parking on the Portland side and CBL tickets for two adults with 3 kids, you are well over \$50 to visit grandparents at their house. This is just one scenario of my family. There are several other family scenarios as well.

Please consider some options for visiting family of residents:

Re-institute the commuter book--Call it the family book and make it affordable and valid for a month. Would it work that in order to purchase one, you need a copy of the annual pass or 90 day pass in order to purchase the book?

Ridership has to be down for this being just one reason. The others are matters such as the Canadians aren't coming. A lot of businesses on the Island have said their sales numbers were way off.

Island living is dependent on CBL. It is part of the Island culture. I think in general CBL does a good job in a not-so-easy situation.

My family has owned property on the Island since the 50's. I would love to see my children and grandchildren be able to visit more often. They are not typical day trippers. I am sure other families have similar issues. Let's all work together to try and fix some of these issues, increase ridership with a new boat coming, and have a win-win.

Thanks for reading this.

Christine Cassidy

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3/11/2026

Dear CBL Directors,

As you examine fare increases again, will you please address the need for affordable passenger tickets for infrequent travelers and family members.

This is not a financial matter to assign to a charitable entity, this is a responsibility of the board to ensure equity, and the sustainability of island living for families of all financial categories.

Sincerely,

Laura Glendening

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3/4/2026

Dear Casco Bay Finance Committee,

I am very happy to hear that a family rate is going to be considered.

Like other year round Peaks Islanders, we have family and friends who have to consider spending \$14 per ticket to visit.

Peaks has been our home since 1989 and our child grew up on Peaks. We do not have another home on the mainland. This summer it will cost his family \$35 per visit. Even though he lives in Portland, I'm sure it will result in fewer visits.

Please consider a system, such as the car tickets, that can be purchased by year round ticket holders for a discount.

I also do not understand why Peaks and the other islands that are part of Portland, are subsidizing the city of Long Island citizens.

Sincerely,

Karen Friedman

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**From:** Mark Rogus <  
**Date:** March 10, 2026 at 8:51:36 AM EDT  
**To:** [comment@cascobaylines.com](mailto:comment@cascobaylines.com)  
**Subject:** Proposed Fare Increase

Good morning Ben,

Thank you for the presentation of the 2026 proposed rate adjustments. I've reviewed the proposal carefully and wanted to share some thoughts.

1) The two-tier pass structure is well-grounded in the District's statutory obligations, and holding the annual pass increase to just 0.7% — below inflation — genuinely protects the riders who depend most on the ferry.

2) The 90-day pass simplification and the Friends & Family discount ticket bundle shows real responsiveness to community feedback. Nice job!

That said, a few areas give me pause:

1) The 21.4% peak single-ticket increase is the largest single-step fare change in the proposal. While single tickets are likely used predominantly by "visitors", some islanders who travel infrequently will face the largest proportional annual cost increase of any rider type. Based on past feedback there is a group of year rounders that will be negatively impacted.

I urge you and the Board to consider a graduated glide path (e.g., \$15.50 in 2026, \$17.00 in 2027) which would achieve the same long-term goal with less abruptness.

2) The Friends & Family program's single-transaction requirement will be considered inflexible / rigid for some. Residents are unlikely to know in March how many summer visits they'll need to cover. Allowing purchases in smaller batches, ideally tracked by passholder account, would make the benefit more flexible and limit "gaming" the system. While CBL may not have the capability to link a F&F ticket bundle to passenger accts, I urge the staff and Board to develop actions to achieve this capability ideally tied into the electronic ticketing initiative. Again it is important to communicate the "intention and timeline" to the community in the fare change messaging.

3) The proposal still does not address low-income riders who face a real barrier to the upfront cost of an annual pass, even at its excellent per-trip value.

While normally a means-tested assistance program — funded in part by the increased single-ticket revenue — would strengthen both the equity case and the statutory affordability argument - I suspect it may not be operationally feasible for CBL.

Consider collaborating with PIC or the City of Portland to establish a short term loan/installment program would be an approach that would address this matter for this group of year rounders.

4) The revenue projections assume stable visitor volume despite a 21% peak fare increase. A conservative scenario accounting for potential price elasticity would give the Board and the PUC a more complete picture of the range of potential revenue outcomes.

5) Finally, and most importantly, the staff and Board needs to focus on demonstrating actions to lower annual operating lower costs. You mention this in your opening paragraph but provide no detail on how and when CBL will attack this growing problem.

The board can and should NOT keep coming back asking for annual fare increases however modest, without demonstrating prudent fiscal responsibility to lower costs. This is aligned with the Board's objective to reduce the deficit - but I have not read or heard any multi-year plan to achieve this objective. A good KPI metric that I urge CBL's Board to adopt is to offset annual inflation through lower costs. This is hard and requires significant effort but it is doable.

Overall, this is a thoughtful and well-structured proposal that would benefit from a few minor changes.

The recommendations above are offered in that spirit.

Thank you for your continued engagement with the community on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Mark Rogus

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3/4/2026

I appreciate that the board is considering the importance of a family discount ticket option for visiting family members who don't live on Peaks Island. During the summer, the cost for a family of 4 (two adults and two teenage children) to visit their grandparents for the day is too high and I hope the board can come up with a solution to reduce this cost.

A proposal on increasing passenger tickets will be discussed at this meeting as well as a proposed family discount ticket plan. I do not support an increase in passenger tickets this year. We should see if closing the budget gap can be done by increasing freight charges with a system which recognizes the additional cost in fuel and time to the outer islands.

Chuck Radis

Peaks Island



**Laurie Pulver**

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**From:** Rate Change  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 12:06 PM  
**To:** Mark Rogus; Rate Change  
**Cc:** Jennifer Lavanture; Jean Hoffman; Rate Change  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed Fare Increase

Thanks, Mark!

Appreciate, the comments and further context.



**Ben Dinsmore**  
General Manager  
Casco Bay Lines  
207-774-7871 (ext. 103)  
207-774-7875 (fax)  
[bend@cascobaylines.com](mailto:bend@cascobaylines.com)



**Casco Bay Lines**

**From:** Mark Rogus <[rogus\\_ms@icloud.com](mailto:rogus_ms@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 12:02 PM  
**To:** Rate Change <[ratechange@cascobaylines.com](mailto:ratechange@cascobaylines.com)>  
**Cc:** Jennifer Lavanture <[JenniferL@cascobaylines.com](mailto:JenniferL@cascobaylines.com)>; Jean Hoffman <[JeanH@cascobaylines.com](mailto:JeanH@cascobaylines.com)>; Rate Change <[ratechange@cascobaylines.com](mailto:ratechange@cascobaylines.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed Fare Increase

Hi Ben

Thank you... A few remarks to each of your responses below.  
Sent from my iPad

On Mar 11, 2026, at 11:01 AM, Rate Change <[ratechange@cascobaylines.com](mailto:ratechange@cascobaylines.com)> wrote:

Hi Mark,

Thank you for your insight and excellent comments. Since day one, I've heard about opportunities for more transparency within the District for decisions being proposed and it was important for me to "lay it all out there in black and white" knowing it would promote

more substantive discussions among board members and the community. I can already see that the conversations and questions between board members and the public, demonstrates a higher understand and appreciation of the reality that is facing CBL.

Regarding your specific comments in order:

1. I considered many iterations. Unfortunately, there is no realistic scenario of raising single ticket prices by only \$1.50 (\$15.50) that will reach the board approved budget of raising scheduled passenger revenue by 12.5% in FY26. You'd have to raise the annual, 90-day, and 30-day passes by ~25%.

This is why I am not a fan of "budgets". They have a tendency to encourage budget huggers and poor decision making. Used as a "guide" is fine... so long as the board doesn't expect all decisions to align with a budget when it does not make sense - Carry / report the budget variance and call it a day. Setting the budgets "before" agreeing on the fare rate change ties your hands if that is the Board's expectation. The sequence of activities should be improved to account for the certain members of Board backtracking when they don't like an answer on cost or revenue - easy said than done I know.

2. Tickets are fully refundable for 60 days after purchase and can be redeemed indefinitely even after expiration with a very small transaction fee (25 cents per ticket). I considered cap levels at 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 tickets. 12 at a time provides the most flexibility for islanders depending on their situation and it minimized the administrative burden. But again, tickets are refundable and/or exchangeable.

I believe Barbara Carter remarks are shared by a larger cohort (still not huge but vocal) of PI property owners - AKA summer residents who were not represented in the meeting today. Still think it would be good to "pilot" a F&F concept and check results. My point was more about the need to purchase a 12 ticket bundle when only 5 are needed and more an attempt to reduce potential whining about "excess" of tickets. I had forgotten about the refundable nature so this should alleviate anyone concern about excess tickets with a 12 ticket bundle.

3. The board is currently working on addressing the PUC's directives from the Dec 2025 order which specifically address these issues. We're also working with the PIC (Peaks) as well as assistance networks on other islands as well as exploring internal financing opportunities.

Means testing (affordability) is the only way to really get at the affordability issue. I would rather see local island groups (like PIC) address this matter and NOT CBL. CBL is not a lender or bank. Sounds like you may be already considering various approaches.

4. We've seen tremendous price elasticity even after the larger single ticket increase in 2024. Ridership levels were within 0.1% YoY. But I will provide price elasticity at the next workshop.

I completely agree and believe that the summer single ticket prices have more head room. I'd rather keep pushing these prices up and test this threshold than force year round residents to bear the burden of higher fares.

5. I agree that operating costs also need to be addressed, however, the memo was already 2500+ words and I felt adding any more detail, about parallel initiatives, while reassuring to some, wouldn't be helpful.

I continue to be concerned that the board's allocation of time, discussion and analysis on revenues is disproportionate to the cost side. Addressing costs is a critical pressure "relief valve" relative to fares increases.

Lastly, I can't stress enough how important grounding fare increases to a specific index. The most equitable approach would be to apply the index rate to each category equally but my personal wallet prefers the cross subsidization approach you took and I suspect that is true of most year-rounders. Today's painful discussion will occur every year otherwise. Make it automatic and formula driven - it should help with the PUC and with getting Board members aligned. It will negatively impact the "means testing:" cohort, but other solutions are needed for that group anyway. For those who adore budgets it simplifies this process and eliminates the "how did you arrive at the percentage" and why is one group advantaged or disadvantaged more than another.

Good luck brother...

Mark

**Ben Dinsmore**  
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207-774-7875 (fax)  
[bend@cascobaylines.com](mailto:bend@cascobaylines.com)

<image001.png>

**From:** Mark Rogus <[rogus\\_ms@icloud.com](mailto:rogus_ms@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:07 AM  
**To:** Rate Change <[ratechange@cascobaylines.com](mailto:ratechange@cascobaylines.com)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Proposed Fare Increase

See below. First email went to the wrong box.

Mark S. Rogus  
607-542-6238 (m)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Mark Rogus <[rogus\\_ms@icloud.com](mailto:rogus_ms@icloud.com)>  
**Date:** March 10, 2026 at 8:51:36 AM EDT  
**To:** [comment@cascobaylines.com](mailto:comment@cascobaylines.com)  
**Cc:** Barring Coughlin <[barringcoughlin@gmail.com](mailto:barringcoughlin@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Proposed Fare Increase

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The recommendations above are offered in that spirit.

Thank you for your continued engagement with the community on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Mark Rogus

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Notice: Under Maine law, documents, including e-mails, that are received or prepared for use in connection with CBL's business may be public records. As a result, please be advised that what is written in an e-mail could be released to the public and/or the media if requested.

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## Laurie Pulver

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**From:** Jean Hoffman  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 11, 2026 6:33 AM  
**To:** Rate Change  
**Subject:** FW: family ticket idea

**From:** Mary Lou Wendell <marylouwendell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 11, 2026 5:27 AM  
**To:** Jean Hoffman <JeanH@cascobaylines.com>; Mary Lou Wendell <marylouwendell@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: family ticket idea

Thanks for reaching out, Jean. But I do not have the time to attend or watch a meeting where people are limited to two or three minutes of speaking. If you were inviting me and others to engage in an actual conversation, I'd be interested.

Also, I find your solicitation confusing.

What does this have to do with what the PUC ordered you to do, which is to study and provide relief for islanders from the last go around, which they considered to be "rate shock?"

So, partly in response to your request, there continues to be a problem with the existing passenger fare system, which is that it also hits families like mine hard. My daughter is away in college. My son is at his father's a lot in Beunswick. When they come to Peaks, the place where they were born and raised, they have to pay \$14 per ticket in the summer. That's outrageous. For Molly, we buy commuter passes for a month, even though she is not a commuter. Neither am I, frankly.

There should be a way for us to buy affordable passes that are based on actual use. Like a punch pass that never expires.

I have heard many people say the same.

Feel free to forward this response to staff and other board members.

Mary Lou Wendell

On Tue, Feb 10, 2026, 3:38 PM Jean Hoffman <[JeanH@cascobaylines.com](mailto:JeanH@cascobaylines.com)> wrote:

Mary Lou,

I have kept notes on people who have requested a family ticket option, and you have brought this up more than once as something important to your family.

The Finance Committee will be meeting tomorrow, Wed 2/11 at 7:45am in the terminal, and online, to start to consider an incremental increase in passenger fares two years after the last rate change, and to consider a family ticket option. There will be a second meeting next month, on 3/11 at 7:45am in the terminal and online, at which both agenda items will be further considered.

I would like to invite you to come to the meeting(s) and/or to write to us at [ratechange@cascobayline.com](mailto:ratechange@cascobayline.com) with your thoughts. It is helpful for staff and board members to hear how islanders see the need for a family discount option, how often you might use it, what the pattern of visiting by non-island resident family members is for different families, for considering in trying to design a plan that is broadly responsive to the numerous islanders who have shared that they desire a more affordable option for visiting family members.

Information on all CBL meetings can be found on the calendar under "about us\board" on the [cascobaylines.com](http://cascobaylines.com) website. Here is the link:

<https://cascobaylines.webex.com/cascobaylines/j.php?MTID=m5ef23a19d50692a7b1c345a60032f1c2>

Event Password: CBL123 (225123 from phones)

Audio conference: United States Toll +1-408-418-9388

Meeting Access Code: 2334 989 3059

When calling on a phone, if prompted, please dial the designated meeting access code followed by the event password: 225123. To use the raise hand feature on a phone, please dial \*3.

Should you have any questions about accessing the meetings, please let us know. All public comments sent to [ratechange@cascobaylines.com](mailto:ratechange@cascobaylines.com) received before 6:45 AM on the morning of a meeting will be shared with the Committee for consideration.

Thanks for your communication about this issue for your family, which also affects others.

Jean

Jean Hoffman

Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, Board of Directors

Casco Bay Island Transit District

[jeanh@cascobaylines.com](mailto:jeanh@cascobaylines.com)

**Please note this is my official CBL email account as an elected member of the board of directors of Casco Bay Island Transit District.**

**If your message does not concern CBL please use one of my personal email addresses**

**Notice: Under Maine law, documents, including e-mails, that are received or prepared for use in connection with CBL's business may be public records. As a result, please be advised that what is written in an e-mail could be released to the public and/or the media if requested.**

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**Laurie Pulver**

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**From:** Jean Hoffman  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 6:17 PM  
**To:** Barring Coughlin  
**Cc:** Jennifer Lavanture; Benjamin Dinsmore; Rate Change  
**Subject:** RE: CBL Proposed Fare Change  
**Attachments:** Data for Passenger Rate Discussion February 2026 v1.1.pdf

Barring

Thank you for your thoughtful comments (below this email) and permission to copy to [ratechange@cascobaylines.com](mailto:ratechange@cascobaylines.com) to be shared with Finance Committee and board members.

A few responses to your numbered comments:

1 Note your good advice, thank you.

2 Agree Ben's presentation and memo were excellent, I hope everyone reads the memo. Note your request about the comparable ferry ticket rates, which Ben included in the analysis at the Feb 2026 Finance Committee meeting (attached), and which presentation is available via the link in Ben's Finance memo. I'm sure Ben will be happy to include that slide in an updated presentation for next week's workshop.

3 Comments noted. Have also heard that PIC did not need all the money budgeted for free ferry tickets this past year. I would again invite you to review the analysis presented at the Feb Finance meeting with respect to pass adoption, as that narrative makes clear the growing adoption of passes by Peaks Islanders. Jan and Feb rocketrez data show the continuing trend of annual pass adoption. A majority of Peaks Islanders now have passes.

4 it is the intent to implement a family and friends discount with any single ticket fare increase to respond to the many requests for a solution for family members and not to increase the problem of single ticket affordability for family and friends who visit regularly but not frequently enough to justify a pass.

5 The Board passed a resolution to reduce the annual operating deficit to no more than \$1mm in FY 2027. The goal is a long way from being achieved and will require much more work on the expense side in addition to the rate changes that the Finance Committee has led. There is as yet no commitment to a balanced budget.

Thanks again for your participation as a citizen member of the Finance Committee. I value your perspective and appreciate your time.

Jean Hoffman  
Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair, Board of Directors  
Casco Bay Island Transit District  
[jeanh@cascobaylines.com](mailto:jeanh@cascobaylines.com)

**From:** Barring Coughlin <barringcoughlin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 3:38 PM  
**To:** Jean Hoffman <JeanH@cascobaylines.com>  
**Cc:** Jennifer Lavanture <JenniferL@cascobaylines.com>; Benjamin Dinsmore <BenD@cascobaylines.com>  
**Subject:** CBL Proposed Fare Change

Dear Jean,

1. I think the proposed fare change is good. I don't think the board ought to be distracted by the percentage increase discussion. The percentage looks big, but in actual numbers it is only \$3. Focus on that instead of 21%. I encourage CBL to continue to remind residents that the day trippers to Peaks provide by far the bulk of the system subsidy.
  
2. I think Ben's presentation and its depth is excellent. I particularly would encourage further use of annual estimated costs for ridership categories, rather than cost per ride. I will repeat my only question from yesterday, if you are going to reference fares on other systems, why not show the numbers? This document should be persuasive, and telling readers they can look the numbers up themselves is not what you need to do to garner support.
  
3. I think it is PIC's responsibility to assess the degree of need for subsidized tickets, not CBL's. I have suggested that at a prior meeting, but the voices opposing fare increases keep pressing CBL to do the analysis. My understanding that PIC was not able to use up all of the tickets it budgeted for those in need last year. The Downbay islands monitor their local needs.
  
4. Family and friends looks good, but administration could prove more time consuming. Could it be deferred until we finally get electronic ticketing?
  
5. What is your timetable for reaching a balanced budget? I don't think I ever heard a longer-term plan put that way. It would be helpful to know, if only for discussion purposes.

Regards,



**Barring Coughlin**

**29 Greenwood Street  
Peaks Island Maine 04108**

**719-930-7706 Mobile**

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## Laurie Pulver

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**From:** Mark Rogus <rogus\_ms@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 6:17 PM  
**To:** Rate Change; Benjamin Dinsmore; Jean Hoffman  
**Cc:** Barring Coughlin  
**Subject:** Affordability for Casco Bay Island Residents

In preparation for tomorrow morning's meeting, I have been thinking about the "affordability" question that was previously raised by a community member. As of this email, I had not seen an attempt by the Board to tackle this point, so I did a bit of research and prepared the analysis below. My goal was to produce a "thought starter" for further involving "affordability". A fair and reasonable question and also an important one for members of our island communities.

In my view, the issue is not whether fares should ever increase. The key question is: **How can CBITD maintain financial sustainability while protecting affordability for the residents who depend on the service most?**

**Personally, given the significant catch-up the Board accomplished in 2024 on fares and the recent vehicle change, I believe that cost reduction actions should take priority over any future proposed fare increase and until such time that Board can demonstrate actual year-over-year cost reduction to lower CBITD's annual deficit. Once cost reductions are achieved, any future fare increases should be indexed / pegged to a public data source such as the Consumer Price Index and should be known and easily calculated by the public for transparency and accountability. This enables islanders to plan/budget for potential increases and enable the staff and board to build the revenue line of the annual budget with relative ease and lower drama/contention.**

### **Executive Summary**

Maine has the **oldest population in the United States**, and many Casco Bay island communities are **significantly older than the state average**.

At the same time, property taxes and other housing costs have been rising faster than incomes. For island residents—who rely on ferry service for work, healthcare, education, and daily needs—fare increases function less like discretionary transportation costs and more like **a fixed cost of living**.

As the CBITD Board evaluates its fare policy, demographic and economic realities suggest that **affordability pressures may be greatest for island residents, particularly retirees and households on fixed incomes. This "squeeze" applies to both passholders and single-ticket fares for year-round residents.**

**Maine Demographics: The Oldest State in the U.S.**

According to the **U.S. Census Bureau**:

- **Median age in Maine:** 44.8 (highest in the United States)
- **Population age 65+:** ~23% (about **1 in 4** residents)

Older households are more likely to depend on:

- Social Security
- pensions
- retirement savings

... and these income sources generally grow more slowly than housing and living costs.

#### Casco Bay Islands Are Even Older

Demographic data from the **U.S. Census, Island Institute community profiles, and local census estimates** show several island populations are **older than Maine overall**.

Location	Median Age	Population 65+
Maine	44.8	~23%
Peaks Island	~58-60	~35-38%
Long Island	~47	~25%
Chebeague Island	~60	~40-43%
Cliff Island	~65+	~50%

This means many island communities have **one-third to one-half of residents at or above retirement age**.

#### Rising Property Tax Burden

Housing costs have been increasing faster than income.

	Annual Median Household Income	Median	Property Tax	Burden
2015	\$50,826		\$1,700	3.35%
2019	\$58,924		\$2,300	3.90%
2023	\$71,773		\$2,926	4.08%

Over the past decade:

- Property taxes increased **~72%**
- Household income increased **~41%**

As a result, housing-related taxes are consuming a **larger share of household income**.

#### State income tax

Maine residents face **both property and income taxes**.

State	Income Tax
New Hampshire	None
Florida	None
Texas	None
Maine	Up to 7.15%

**For households living on fixed incomes, the combination of property taxes, income taxes, and rising housing costs can significantly affect disposable income.**

### **Ferry Fares as a Cost-of-Living Issue**

For mainland residents, transportation alternatives exist. Island residents served by CBITD generally **have no substitute transportation option.**

Ferry trips are necessary for:

- commuting
- healthcare access
- groceries and services
- school and community activities

Because of this, CBITD fares function more like **an unavoidable household expense**, similar to utilities or other taxes.

### **Bottom Line**

Maine's demographics and economic trends create a unique affordability challenge:

- oldest population in the United States
- moderate household incomes of which for many island residents are "fixed"
- rising housing costs
- essential reliance on ferry transportation

For many island residents, **ferry fares are not discretionary travel costs—they are part of the basic cost of living.**

### **Data Sources**

U.S. Census Bureau (ACS)

Maine State Economist

Maine Revenue Services

Island Institute Community Profiles

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**Laurie Pulver**

---

**From:** Carol I. Eisenberg <CEisenberg@rwlb.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2026 3:18 AM  
**To:** Rate Change  
**Subject:** RE: Comments on Proposed Rate Changes-- resending with my name!

I applaud the shift this past year to less expensive passes for regular riders of the ferry and more expensive single ticket prices. Shifting costs so that residents are overall paying less for ferry service while day trippers are paying more makes living or working on the island more affordable, plus the convenience of an annual pass is a bonus. Even as someone who does not commute daily, the annual pass is a great deal for less frequent but regular travel.

I am pleased to see a proposal to address the one major drawback of our current system, which is that it does not recognize a third category between day trippers and regular riders, which is what I would call friends and family of residents. The price of a single ticket is reasonable for a tourist for whom the boat ride and an island visit are an attraction. On the other hand, friends and relatives coming to visit island residents are riding the boats not as an attraction or an end in itself, but merely as public transportation to get to a friend/relative's home. It is off-putting to invite friends to come to dinner, for example, when it costs \$28 (soon to be \$34) for a couple just to come to your house. It is pricey college students to return home on school breaks and have to pay \$14/\$17 just to get home, especially if they go to town once or twice while they are home. High schoolers who want to invite a friend to visit face a pretty steep barrier to just having a pal come over.

The affordable annual passes for residents have been an incomplete solution to the cost shifting rate structure, and adding discounted tickets for annual pass holders is exactly what is needed to complete the transformation of the rate structure. A limited number of half-price tickets for pass holders is a good way to solve this problem. I would prefer a plan that does not require purchasing all the allotted tickets at once, as well as a plan that has a higher number of tickets allowed...but I think it is most important to get some sort of plan in place to provide relief, with the idea that the plan can be modified in the future as we gain experience with how the program works.

Carol Eisenberg  
Peaks Island

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**Laurie Pulver**

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**From:** BRIAN WEILBRENNER <weilba@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2026 9:34 PM  
**To:** Rate Change  
**Subject:** Rate change

We bought our seasonal cottage 10 years ago to enjoy time with our family. We have been renting on the island for 20 years. Peaks has always had that blue collar feel that always attracted us. The new rate change makes it tough for our young adult children to come and visit us for the day. A seasonal pass does not make sense for us therefore there only option is to pay these outrageous increases or not come to visit us. This pass system favors the people that can probably afford this the easiest. There are many wealthy seniors that are paying 200 dollars for a season. This puts the burden on everyone else. I do not understand why we can't go back to the commuter books. It was an easy to manage system without giving all the perks to the ones who can afford it the most.

Thanks

Brian Weilbrenner  
25 oak ave Peaks  
Sent from my iPhone

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## Laurie Pulver

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**From:** Janine Blatt <neenb16@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 5, 2026 8:02 AM  
**To:** Rate Change  
**Subject:** Rate change

Hello. I am a retired peaks islander on a fixed income. I do not benefit from a pass and so buy single tickets. At least I get a senior discount, so thanks for that. But in your new plan I don't qualify for the family tickets. That prohibits my daughter and granddaughters from visiting. Can you tie this to the resident boarding pass instead. It's rather biased to only offer it to passholders, not us most vulnerable seniors. I hope you remedy this.

Janine Blatt  
122 central ave  
Peaks island  
Sent from my iPhone  
Sent from my iPhone

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## Laurie Pulver

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**From:** Sarah Cooper <sarah@se-cooper.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 2:55 PM  
**To:** Rate Change  
**Subject:** Comment on proposed passenger fare increase

Dear Casco Bay Lines Finance Committee,

I'm writing as a year-round Peaks Island resident, working mother of a toddler, and soon a mother of two. I want to share honest, personal feedback on the proposed passenger fare increase to \$17 and to offer concrete asks I hope you'll consider incorporating into the final proposal.

I recognize the real challenge we're facing.

CBL's dependence on competitive federal grants to close its annual operating deficit is genuinely precarious. Unlike other urban ferry systems, such as Washington State Ferries (which seems to cover its funding gap with dedicated state tax revenue) or the NYC Ferry (which receives a city subsidy) CBL has no stable backstop if a grant cycle is missed or federal priorities shift. I understand and support the work to reduce that reliance. I support the first passenger fare change. Fifteen years was too long without a rate adjustment, and the new annual pass pricing is largely affordable (especially compared to other transit passes) and something to be proud of.

However I have serious concerns about a second hike on single tickets, so soon after the first. And about the harbinger it represents...

At \$17 a ticket, it becomes \$60, for example, before my brother and sister-in-law even arrive to visit or help my family for a day. (That's \$34 in tickets plus \$20-25 in parking). For a family of four, we're talking over \$93 for a 15 min boat ride.

My husband and I usually absorb ferry and taxi costs when friends or family visit, because we want to lower the barrier for them to come. Otherwise we pay the higher cost of social isolation. But that means the real cost of island life is higher than our annual passes reflect. The CBL proposals frequently reference residents -- but none of us live as isolated individuals; we're connected to family and friends on the mainland who we need to be able to invite into our home and lives.

I didn't host a first birthday party for my son beyond neighbors because I was too ashamed to ask dozens of friends to spend \$50 just for a pizza party after accounting for various tickets and parking.

We've started covering water taxi fares for visitors by keeping a card on file because at some point it becomes more practical (and cheaper per person) than coordinating and buying ferry tickets. That's not what public transportation should feel like.

With the proposed \$17 rate, it's also a better deal for groups of three or four people to take a taxi and then ride the ferry back for free. Those economics also put the affordability of occasional water taxis at risk (a luxury, but sometimes a necessity), because people will figure this out and taxis will raise their rates.

On the proposed discounted ticket packet for passholders: I appreciate the intent. However, the design creates an unrealistic barrier to adoption. It also fails to address core unmet needs for many islanders and visitors. All change involves some degree of loss. But the board had promised they'd come back to accessible ticket booklets -- a long-standing aid to island life.

Requiring working parents to spend two to three hours round-trip ferrying friends and family to access marginally discounted tickets is not a viable option. I simply do not have the time. People need to be able to self-serve ticket purchases, similar to how people across the country buy subway tickets or reloadable cards to visit other neighborhoods. Other islanders also deserve access to purchase them, without requiring an annual pass.

Without providing much benefit, the current proposal's design requires significant costs -- time and cognitive load -- including a high level of coordination, gate keeping by CBL staff, purchasing planning, and rationing (since it seems we can only buy one booklet per pass).

**\*\*My direct asks\*\***

**1. Hold the single ticket fare at \$14 for at least another year.** Let the first rate change fully play out before layering on another increase, as well as the new vehicle changes.

**2. Implement a true multi-ride card or booklet that doesn't have a cap on how many can be bought** - e.g 5 to 10 rides, purchasable online or at the terminal without requiring a round trip escort, and accessible to anyone, not just annual pass holders. This would meaningfully help residents who work on the island and travel less frequently, babysitters and other support, visiting family, weekly renters, and occasional visitors -- the people whose access to the island directly affects whether year-round residential life is sustainable (and enjoyable).

**3. Invest in what's now basic table stakes technology for transit systems:** Other transit systems have solved the logistical concerns around shared booklets decades ago with tap cards and linked accounts. CBL should invest in that technology. It would also give us real data on ridership profiles and utilization to inform future policy.

**4. Prioritize policy and advocacy work to diversify CBL's funding beyond federal grants and ticket fares.** I'd love to know what organizing or management efforts are underway to pursue dedicated state or city support for CBL -- following the model of analogous systems that connect a metro area with nearby residential islands. And I'd like to know how residents can plug into those efforts. I look longingly at the [Seattle - Bainbridge ferry](#) as an example of rates to strive towards (\$5-10 tickets, \$1 for bikes). How can we collectively make this happen?

**\*\*Here's what's at stake\*\***

I moved to Peaks Island, in part, because the ferry felt like Maine's best public transportation—a connective thread between a safe loving community and the city's downtown. But when the cost and friction of visiting keeps rising, something shifts. Friends stop coming. Family visits become logistical negotiations or once a year events. You start measuring your social life off island by what you can afford to subsidize or what your loved ones can afford. Slowly, year-round family life on the island becomes something only people with multigenerational ties or high incomes can sustain.

I don't want Peaks to become a seasonal destination. I want it to remain a place where working families, with kids and babysitters and visiting in-laws, can actually live. That requires a ferry that's priced and structured more like public transit -- closer to a subway card -- than a tourist boat.

I know the Finance Committee is working hard on a genuinely difficult problem. I know we increasingly can't count on government support for vital services nationwide. I'm grateful for the chance to share this feedback, and I'm rooting for a proposal that holds the line on single fares while finding smarter ways to close the gap.

Thank you for your time and for listening.

Sarah Cooper

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Sarah Cooper

[linkedin.com/se-cooper](https://www.linkedin.com/in/se-cooper)

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## Laurie Pulver

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**From:** BRIAN WEILBRENNER <weilba@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 4:29 PM  
**To:** Rate Change  
**Subject:** Rate changes

Hello,

My name is Brian Weilbrenner, and I own a seasonal cottage at 25 Oak Ave. I am writing to respectfully request that the Board reconsider any additional rate increases this year for the reasons outlined below.

- 1) Based on my understanding listening to last Tuesday's Board meeting, there may still be additional cost-saving opportunities to evaluate. While I recognize that identifying and implementing efficiencies takes time and effort, I believe it would be prudent to explore these options fully before implementing another rate increase.
- 2) In the passenger rate discussion packet, you note that last year's car ferry totals were heavily influenced by the extended use of discounted tickets well into August. Since that discount has been eliminated, it may be helpful to first review how this change positively impacts revenue before adjusting rates again.
- 3) New commercial vehicle rates are now in effect. I recommend allowing time to assess the positive revenue impact of these rates before considering additional increases.
- 4) A new ferry is expected to come online this year, which may increase revenue and over time provide cost savings through improved efficiency and lower maintenance requirements.

I also reviewed the packet's market comparison to other ferry systems. At first glance, the comparisons appear generally reasonable. However, each of the ten referenced ferry services offers multi-ride discount tickets. I have included two examples below.

**Cousins Island to Chebeague Island:** \$19.00 per round trip for a 15-minute ferry ride.  
10-ride discount for a round trip savings of 5.60  
10-ride resident discount: for a roundtrip savings of 10.00

These tickets do not have an expiration date.

**Woods Hole to Martha's Vineyard:** \$22.00 for a 7-mile ferry ride.  
10-ride discount: for a round trip savings of 3.10. (tickets good for a year)  
46-ride commuter discount: for a round trip savings 13.58

Given that these ferry systems offer multi-ride discounts, I respectfully ask the Board to consider whether Casco Bay Lines could provide a similar option.

As an alternative I propose offering 10 ride discount book for 77.00 these tickets would be valid for a year. This would allow more riders to access discounted travel for visiting family and friends

My concern is that the current structure provides the huge benefit to frequent riders by selling heavily discounted year-round passes. Which also gives the benefit of discounted vehicle tickets and a

proposed 12 ticket family and friends discount. This is placing an unfair burden on seasonal residents and others who travel less often. Many of us also have family and friends who we would like to have visit.

I have been coming to Peaks Island for 25 years—first as a weekly summer renter and later as an owner after purchasing a cottage eight years ago. One of the things that has always drawn me to Peaks Island is its accessible, working- and middle- class character. I believe continued rate increases will permanently change the fabric of the island community forever. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board to reconsider any additional rate increases at this time.

Sincerely,  
Brian Weilbrenner

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