



115
February 27, 2008

Loyalist Township Elected Officials Petition Minister of Transportation for Better Ferry Deal

On Monday, February 25th, members of Loyalist Township Council, led by Reeve McEwen and Ward 3 Councillor Duncan Ashley, met with the Minister of Transportation and senior Ministry staff in Toronto to discuss the inequities between funding programs for Ministry operated ferries and the Township operated Amherst Island service.

In a letter dated February 25, 2008 the following requests were made to the Minister:

1. That, in a timely manner, you continue the initiative taken by Minister Cansfield to conduct a review of ferry operations with the intent of providing an equitable system of ferry services in Eastern Ontario.
2. Recognizing that a comprehensive review of ferry operations could take a significant period of time, if it occurs at all, in the interim, we request that you:
 - a) Approve an agreement that would provide 100% subsidy to the Amherst Island Ferry Service on all expenditures related to the ferry operation; and
 - b) Authorize Ministry staff to work with the Township to provide capital improvements to the Township-owned ferry docks at Millhaven and Stella for construction when operational considerations justify the need for such improvements; and further,
3. That you approve funding in 2008 for small capital projects, such as ferry office repairs and ferry supplies storage facilities, that have been deferred pending the outcome of the proposed ferry review, but are needed now for operational efficiency and to provide safe working conditions for ferry employees.

Reeve McEwen reiterated the requests contained in the letter and asked the Minister to provide timelines for the results of the ferry operational review by MTO. Reeve McEwen noted that the increased fuel costs, and the resulting need to raise revenues, had made commuting a real burden. The Minister noted that the review was not completed but the Ministry was nearing the end of the audit stage.