

The international ferry service between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and New England was terminated in December 2009.

In May of this year local business community formed the Nova Scotia International Ferry partnership (NSIFP) and asked Keith Condon of Tri-Star Industries and Neil LeBlanc, of N. LeBlanc Enterprises to act as Chair and Co-Chair.

The NSIFP Chair says, “The Study supports the contention that, properly structured and conducted, a seasonal international ferry operation between Nova Scotia and the New England could be a financially viable operation.

The Study indicated that the termination of the service has had a dramatic impact on the hospitality sector not only in the southwestern part of the Nova Scotia but throughout the whole province.

The NSIFP has shared the Study’s finding with the provincial government.

"The province appreciates the work and leadership of the Nova Scotia International Ferry Partnership and supports their efforts to find a viable ferry option in Southwest Nova Scotia," said Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister Percy Paris. "Creating and maintaining good sustainable jobs for the Southwest is a priority for the province. It will be up to the private sector to determine if there is a real and viable case to be made for the re-instatement of a service to New England."

The Study indicates that a properly structured service with all the elements designed to benefit Nova Scotia could re-build traffic, maintaining that a service featuring a cruise-ferry offering facilities and amenities comparable to those found on cruise ships would provide an attraction in itself, as well as a more comfortable transportation mode to Nova Scotia.

It pointed to the growth in cruise travel from the U.S. to Canada over the past decade in supporting that contention.

NSIFP co-chair Neil LeBlanc said that while the recent findings of the economic impact study were a tremendous boost for the team working to secure resumption of the service, there was still a lot of work ahead to make it happen.

"That's why we're currently very much in the process of responsibly communicating with potential service operators to determine the right fit in terms of experience, capacity and fiscal competence", LeBlanc said.

His concerns were underlined by the study which pointed out that, to be successful the service needed to respond to the changing needs of the tourism industry, have a convenient schedule and suitable frequency and be competitively priced.

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