

Mary Anderson
23 Fourth Street
Ward's Island
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 2B6



GEOFFREY A. WILSON
Chief Executive Officer
Directeur général

June 29, 2015

Dear Ms. Anderson,

I am writing with regard to your recent correspondence with Trinity-Spadina Member of Parliament, Adam Vaughan, regarding this winter's ferry service from Toronto's mainland to the Islands. In the letter you make references to the ferry service that was provided by Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to residents of Toronto Island this winter, as well as the role the Toronto Port Authority (renamed PortsToronto in January of this year) plays in managing the Port during the winter. I'd like to take this opportunity to address some of the comments you made that pertain to our organization, as there are a number of points that are inaccurate and require clarification.

First and foremost, as it forms the basis for my subsequent comments, I must address the comments made by Gail Shea, Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, that the "Toronto Island ferry service and its port infrastructure fall under the purview of PortsToronto." The *Ongiara* ferry to Toronto Centre Islands is owned and operated by the City of Toronto, not PortsToronto, as the Minister indicates. PortsToronto only runs the ferry service that crosses the Western Channel, transporting Billy Bishop Airport passengers from the mainland to the airport, which leads me to my second point of clarification.

Specific to your comments relating to the transportation of Toronto Island residents on the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport's ferry and across runways for five weeks this past winter while the City ferry *Ongiara* was out of service, I would like to point out that our airport volunteered this service to residents, visitors and students of Toronto Island as a courtesy. Although we are under no obligation to do so, we provided transportation free-of-charge and worked very closely with our airline partners, the City of Toronto and island organizations, to get people across our runway as quickly, safely and efficiently as our operations would allow. As I'm sure you can appreciate, transporting residents safely across an active runway at regular intervals throughout the day while maintaining Billy Bishop Airport's operations was no easy feat. However, we were more than willing to provide this service as a good neighbour to the Island community.

As an aside, in your letter you reference that the schedule for Island school students was "entirely disrupted" by the City's temporary suspension of the *Ongaria's* service. I can tell you that airport staff worked very closely with Island Public School Principal Scott Woolford on a daily basis during the City ferry outage to make sure that the students arrived at school and arrived at school safely. In fact, just recently PortsToronto visited Island Public School to thank the students for the hundreds of cards of appreciation they sent to us regarding our ferry assistance.

60 Harbour Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5J 1B7
Tel/Tél: 416.863.2037 | email: gwilson@portstoronto.com
PortsToronto.com

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As for your comment that “Toronto and the Toronto Port Authority do not seem able to manage their port in the winter months,” I am assuming that this is once again a reference to the disruption to the City’s ferry service this past winter due to ice build-up within the Harbour rather than the Port itself. It is important to clarify that during the winter months shipping via the Port of Toronto, like all other ports within the Great Lakes system, slows down significantly due to the freezing of the St. Lawrence Seaway. PortsToronto continues to operate the Port during the winter to service businesses domiciled there and to accommodate the odd freighter that may arrive, but removing ice in the inner harbour is not part of our mandate. As you know, the ferry to Toronto Island does not run from the Port but rather from the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal to the north and west of the Port. Given that the city ferry does run throughout the winter months, Toronto Fire Service and the Toronto Police Marine Unit are called in to support the ferry by clearing a path through the ice in the Harbour, something I know they worked tirelessly to undertake this past winter.

Lastly, to answer your questions regarding Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport’s new pedestrian tunnel, the tunnel is scheduled to open in late July of this year and, though the tunnel will provide a link between the mainland and the island and will be publicly accessible, it will not provide access beyond the airport terminal or to the island. I encourage you to visit our website at www.portstoronto.com to learn more.

I hope that this letter will provide you with more clarification on the operations and role of PortsToronto and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport and brings context to this past winter’s ferry situation. PortsToronto strives to be a good neighbour within the waterfront community and we are proud of our efforts to help the community whenever possible.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey A. Wilson
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: The Honourable Gail Shea, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
His Worship John Tory, Mayor, City of Toronto
Adam Vaughan, M.P., Trinity-Spadina
Han Dong, M.P.P., Trinity-Spadina
Councillor Pam McConnell, Ward 28
Councillor Joe Cressy, Ward 20