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Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
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Dear Convener

I am writing to inform the Committee of a forthcoming announcement about an extension of the current ferry fares freeze on the Clyde & Hebrides and Northern Isles networks for a further six months.

The Scottish Government is acutely aware of the current challenges being faced by these communities, particularly with disruption to services on the Clyde and Hebrides network, although the situation will improve as new tonnage starts to join the fleet from next year.

Ticket prices will be held at current levels from October 2023 until the end of March 2024 to help people and businesses from Scotland's remote rural and island communities and support the island communities that depend on these vital services. Confirmation of the fare freeze will allow operators to release their timetables from October onwards.

A review of future fares will also take place to ensure that services remain sustainable, affordable and fair, with feedback from island communities being a key factor in deciding the future shape and priorities. Our Fair Fares Review, which will report by the end of this year and recommend a package of measures which can be considered for implementation from 2024-25 onwards, will aim to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares that supports the future long term viability of a public transport system that is accessible, available and affordable for people throughout Scotland.

Yours sincerely

FIONA HYSLOP

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