



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01473

Name of petitioner

Frances Anne Gillies on behalf of Barra Youth Council

Petition title

Wi-Fi on CalMac ferries

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that a universal system of Wi-Fi operates on all Caledonian MacBrayne ferries which service the Western Isles to the mainland and to provide a specific timescale for implementation.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

September 2011 – Letter written to Caledonian MacBrayne asking for the possibility of Wi-Fi being implemented on CalMac Ferries that service the Western Isles

October 2011 – Letters of support from Community Planning Partnership supporting this issue

December 2011 – Met with Representatives from Calmac and Transport Committee to highlight issue.

October 2012 - Met with Keith Brown, Transport minister at a Statutory Transport Partnership meeting along with MSP Alasdair Allan to discuss further developments in regards to the implementation of Wi-Fi on all Calmac ferries

February 2013 - Letter received from Chief Executive of Caledonian MacBrayne outlining that they are hoping to continue with the pilot scheme on the Lord of the Isles and would consider an upgrade on all ferries

Petition background information

The Barra Youth Council have highlighted the issue of implementing Wi-Fi on all long distance ferry routes that service the Western Isles. They have met and discussed this issue with local Councillors, Community Planning Partnership, Regional Transport Committee and directly with Keith Brown, the Transport minister and Alasdair Allan MSP, at a Strategy Transport Partnership committee meeting.

The introduction of WI-FI on Calmac ferries would be hugely beneficial to local businesses, commuters, the young people from the islands, and tourists. The benefits are:

(1) It would allow greater access to information

- (2) It would increase work productivity
- (3) It would boost local economy
- (4) Greatly improve communication links
- (5) Be more attractive for Calmac passengers.

As a result of this lobbying, in June 2012, a Pilot scheme for Wi-Fi was installed on Lord of the Isles as a trial. This is the longest ferry crossing of 7.5 hours which connects Oban-Castlebay/Lochboisdale. This was seen as great progress although the feedback from Calmac customers has been that the signal is intermittent and available at only one spot on the ferry.

The Barra Youth Council have stated their cause, presented their views provided solutions and have actively engaged in this process. The Youth Council continue to be in dialogue with Calmac in regards to this. They would like to highlight their case at the Petitions Committee and ask for action taken on;

- (1) Assurance from Calmac that any proposed system installed can be accessed by all customers of Calmac and be universal across the Western Isles. This includes all ports - Barra, Lochboisdale, Lochmaddy, Leverburgh, Tarbert and Stornoway.
- (2) Assurance from the Scottish Government that any implementation will take place with a specified time-scale.

We consider this action necessary to gain assurance that this issue is taken seriously by the Scottish Government. By making a formal petition, it is asking the Scottish Government to listen to the young people of the islands, to take our views seriously, to take on board what we are saying and let our voice be heard.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/WiFiCalmac>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

50

Closing date for collecting signatures online

08 / 03 / 2013

Comments to stimulate online discussion

Please support this campaign to get WI-FI on all Calmac ferries which service the Western Isles.