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Councillor Daniel Hampsey  
Argyll and Bute Council

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22 August 2025

Dear Councillor Hampsey,

I was grateful for the opportunity to meet again with you, other councillors and members of the Cowal Transport Forum on 9 May 2025 to discuss my decision to remove 3 return sailings a day, of the 30 currently scheduled, from the Gourock-Dunoon passenger ferry service. I am also grateful for the role that you and Dunoon Community Council have played with CalMac in identifying the sailings to be removed from the timetable. I can confirm that I have approved this proposal and that the revised timetable will come into force from 20 October.

I appreciate that any service reductions will create inconvenience for those who made particular use of those services and I note the representation from you and the Chair of the Community Council for me to rescind that decision. As I have set out, this was necessary to address identified over-provision and ensure that the service complies with subsidy control requirements. Future service provision will therefore balance legal compliance with meeting identified travel needs.

Can I take this opportunity to restate the Scottish Government's commitment to this route, and to putting it on a long-term sustainable basis? The community needs assessment process has confirmed the value of this passenger service, as a part of the public transport network, alongside the vehicle and passenger service provided by Western Ferries – a service commended for its frequency and reliability.

I acknowledge again the challenges around reliability, noting that users have experienced an extended vessel outage during this period. This was recognised in the needs assessment report and was a clear message received through public and stakeholder engagement. As I have said previously, my decision on service levels clarifies the future service requirement and completes a necessary step in progress towards the vessel replacement business case. A number of options and vessel types are being considered by CMAL and I hope that there will be further information forthcoming from the vessels project in the near future.

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I am copying this letter to Chair of the Dunoon Community Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jim Fairlie', written in a cursive style.

**JIM FAIRLIE**

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