

LETTER: Coast crossing a smart idea

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Dear Editor:

There is some incorrect information floating around out there regarding how a new Sunshine Coast crossing would affect an already clogged Upper Levels Highway.

There is no question that there would be more vehicles added to the highway. However, congestion would most likely be better not worse.

Here is why:

Some of the worst congestion occurs due to the ferries unloading 300+ cars all at once onto the highway. A new crossing would be much more evenly spreading out the traffic, as it would be open 24 hours a day.

Just think about the commercial trucks that could use the extra hours not currently available from the ferries.

Believe it or not, half of the coast's 50,000 full-time residents do not have any bus transportation to get there from the Mainland. Malaspina Coach Lines went broke. And the ferry costs for bus passengers have undoubtedly contributed to their demise.

There would most likely be more trades people/professionals that would not have to commute to the coast in the morning by ferry from the Mainland.

Here's why:

A better economy up on the coast will support more tradespeople and professionals that could both work and live there. It just makes sense.

Ferries are expensive to run. Over a 40-year period, the cost of building and fuelling and maintaining the ferries is exorbitant. Now factor in the labour costs. Altogether they amount to well over \$1 billion during that time. And the Sunshine Coast is going to grow and require more ferry services in the coming years.

Bridge/crossing tolls would keep increased traffic to a minimum. A toll of \$15-\$20 each way per car would keep the amount of crossings well in check.

Sunshine Coast residents are holding protests regarding the high cost of taking a ferry. A new crossing would be less expensive than the cost of taking a ferry.

Greatly enhanced bus service would also reduce the amount of cars going to and from the coast. Especially when taking the bus would be a lot more cost-effective for the passenger than taking a vehicle.

There would be a whole lot less congestion at the Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal. No explanation needed about this situation.

Imagine if a crossing had been built 45 or so years ago and the government threatened to take it away from the coast and replace it with ferries instead. I am sure there would be riots on the coast with that scenario.

No system is going to be perfect, but at this stage a new crossing would most likely be a smart idea.

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