



**NORTH CAROLINA  
PUBLIC STAFF  
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

March 14, 2024

Ms. A. Shonta Dunston, Chief Clerk  
North Carolina Utilities Commission  
4325 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4300

Re: Docket No. A-41, Sub 23 – Application of Bald Head Island Transportation, Inc., for Approval of Revisions to Regular Passenger Ferry Schedules to 45-Minute Departures

Dear Ms. Dunston:

On February 19, 2024, Bald Head Island Transportation, Inc. ("BHIT"), filed an Application for Revisions to Ferry Schedules (Application) requesting approval for a revision to its main passenger ferry schedules pursuant to Commission Rules R1-5 and R1-7 and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-32(b). BHIT seeks to change the passenger ferry schedule from a 30-minute turnaround schedule to a 45-minute turnaround schedule,<sup>1</sup> so that trips depart from each destination point every 90 minutes rather than the current 60 minutes.

To date, approximately 124 statements of position and two petitions to intervene have been filed that collectively express considerable concerns about the Application as filed and the need for more communication and transparency from the Applicant.

The prospective intervenors and those submitting statements have requested an opportunity to be heard, including through a public witness hearing. In fact, as stated in its Response to Petitions to intervene (Response), filed March 8, 2024, BHIT has no objection to a public witness hearing and "will gladly participate when and where the Commission deems it appropriate, including on the [Bald Head Island]." See Response at 7. The prospective intervenors and BHIT

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<sup>1</sup> BHIT's current schedules have been approved by Commission Orders in Docket Nos. A-41, Sub 7, Sub 10, Sub 12, Sub 16, and Sub 17.

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differ as to the location, timing, and format of the public witness hearing. BHIT also proposes that a pilot program be allowed prior to the hearing.

The Public Staff agrees that a public hearing is needed in this docket.

While the Public Staff does not take a position as to the location of the public witness hearing, the Public Staff believes that the hearing should be held before any changes are implemented, including a pilot program, in light of the extent of input already received, and that the public hearing should follow the Commission's standard format.

Therefore, the Public Staff respectfully requests that the Commission issue an Order scheduling a public witness hearing, establishing intervenor and discovery guidelines, and requiring customer notice. The Public Staff does not have a position, as yet, as to whether an evidentiary hearing on the Application is warranted and defers to the Commission's discretion.

The Public Staff further requests that it be allowed to participate in the drafting of the notice to customers to ensure that the notice includes a clear and understandable description of the proposed schedule, and that the notice be published, at a minimum, through BHIT's app, on BHIT's website, and at all departure and arrival points in easily observable locations.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address listed below.

Sincerely,

Electronically submitted  
/s/ James Bernier, Jr.  
Staff Attorney  
James.Bernier@psncuc.nc.gov