



Discovery Coast Passage

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10.02.2014 - Senden / British Columbia - SK Touristik und deutsche Kanada-Reiseveranstalter beschwerten sich über Streichungs-Pläne

In einem Brief an die Provinzregierung von British Columbia, adressiert an Premier Christy Clark und den Tourismusminister Todd Stone, haben die führenden deutschen Kanada-Reiseveranstalter ihrem Unmut über die Pläne der Regierung Luft gemacht, die Fährverbindung "Discovery Coast Passage" zwischen Bella Coola an der Pazifikküste und Port Hardy auf Vancouver Island einzustellen.

"Es ist ein absolutes Unding – und das in zweierlei Hinsicht" ärgert sich Rainer Schoof, Geschäftsführer des Kanada-Spezialisten SK Touristik in Senden. Zum einen würde mit dem Highway 20 eine vergleichsweise junge und vielversprechende touristische Route regelrecht zerstört – Ranches, Lodges und Ausflugsanbieter an dieser Strecke stehen vor dem Aus – und zum anderen werde von Seiten der Provinzregierung ein Timing vorgelegt, das es internationalen Veranstaltern nicht einmal im Ansatz ermögliche, auf eine solche neue Situation zu reagieren. Reiseprogramme sind erstellt, Kataloge gedruckt und verteilt und hunderte von Buchungen für die Fährverbindung bereits entgegengenommen.

Fairness und ein Mindestmaß an Rücksichtnahme auf die europäischen Partner und deren Kunden – das ist die Forderung der Nordamerika-Spezialisten an British Columbia und die Fährgesellschaft BC Ferries. Ob es Hoffnung gibt, ist nicht abzusehen. SK Touristik hat zwischenzeitlich bereits damit begonnen, betroffene Kunden zu kontaktieren, um alternative Reisearrangements zu erörtern.

Untenstehend der Brief an Premier Clark und Minister Stone.

Friday, 07th of February 2014

To the Honourable Premier Christy Clark
and the Honourable Minister Todd Stone

Dear Mrs Clark, dear Mr Stone,

the signees of this letter represent the major tour operators in Germany specialized in travel to British Columbia.

To our dismay we have learned that there exist plans to discontinue the BC Ferries service "Discovery Coast Passage" between Bella Coola and Port Hardy. We all still cannot believe that this really is a serious plan of the B.C. Government and at this point we can only urge you to intervene immediately in order to avoid serious and lasting damage to British Columbia tourism from Europe.

Apart from the local problems and grief this would cause for many of our partners in the lodge-, ranch-, hotel- und excursion-business in the Chilcotin and North Vancouver Island regions [...], the B.C. Government is in danger to virtually destroy one of the most important travel routes for repeat customers – Highway 20, the Chilcotin Highway. By forcing this well performing [...] route into a dead-end-situation, B.C. is taking away the major part – if not all – of the route's attractiveness. British Columbia is in danger to lose one of the most substantial and promising magnets for repeat – and thus lasting – tourism from Europe.

[...] Regarding your plans and decisions and to avoid misunderstandings: Apart from our view of the local and province-wide impact of such a decision we still respect the legitimate interest of a company and / or its shareholders to terminate a service which appears not profitable. But what we cannot accept – and what is much more dramatic in our case – is the timing that you seem to have in mind for your corresponding plans. Are you aware of the circumstance that all our 2014 travel catalogues have been printed and completely distributed long before we had the chance to learn about this situation? Just imagine what huge investment this alone is reflecting. The Discovery Coast Passage is published all over Germany and Europe – as a stand-alone-product as well as (and even more so) as a component in all sorts of self-drive-packages. In the public opinion of European travellers the Discovery Coast Passage is happening in 2014! Hundreds of passengers and vehicles are already booked. Bookings for the 2014 season have been accepted for more than 6 months now – just like it has always been the mutually agreed and accepted procedure between BC Ferries and its oversea partners. Even entire tour series with buses and tourguides and many eagerly awaiting German passengers are booked on this connection!

In other words, what you are threatening us with are significant financial losses [...]. Reservation departments would be blocked away to handle the mess of rebooking, recompensation [...] in a time where they should do nothing else but receive and proceed travel bookings to British Columbia. Thus, the total impact for us and for tourism in British Columbia is not even foreseeable at this point.

So, may we raise the question why you seem to consider turning your back on all your oversea partners – partners who have been loyal and reliable to BC Ferries and B.C. Tourism for the past decades? Would it not be a fair and normal procedure to give your partners at least a one-season-notice in order to allow us to adapt to the new situation, to rework and change itineraries and, ultimately, to avoid printing hundreds of pages with wrong contents and thus producing a significant image damage to the general perception of B.C. Tourism's reliability?

At this point we can only hope that it is not too late to minimize or reduce the damage. If it is too late may we kindly inquire as to your recompensation plans, assuming that you would not leave this financial damage on our shoulders alone.

Many thanks for your attention and your quick response.

Kind regards

Rainer Schoof, Managing Director, SK TOURISTIK
Tilo Krause-Dünnow, Managing Director, CANUSA TOURISTIK
Per Illian, Director, DER Touristik Frankfurt

Mike Lehmann, Director, Meier's Weltreisen, DER Touristik Frankfurt
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Andreas Neumann, Managing Director, Explorer Fernreisen