5 October 2026

Cameron.Brewer@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Minister Brewer,

Re: Request for Commerce Commission investigation – Ōpua–Ōkiato vehicle ferry

Dear Minister Brewer,

I am writing to you on behalf of a number of constituents in the Russell and Opua communities regarding the level of charges for the Ōpua–Ōkiato vehicle ferry and the possibility of an investigation under the Commerce Act.

The principal issue being raised with me is whether the charges for this essential ferry service are excessive, particularly given that there is no competing vehicle-ferry service available to residents.

The ferry is the only direct vehicle-ferry connection between the Russell peninsula and Opua. Residents depend upon it for access to employment, healthcare, education, shopping and other essential services, while businesses and suppliers also rely heavily on the crossing.

Could you please advise whether the Commerce Commission is able to examine the level of charges and the competitive circumstances surrounding the service, including:

- whether the operator has substantial market power;
- whether the absence of effective competition is contributing to the level of charges;
- whether contractual, infrastructure or ferry-ramp arrangements create barriers to competition; and
- whether there is any conduct or use of market power that warrants investigation under the Commerce Act.

Wellington Office
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160
grant.mccallum@parliament.govt.nz



GRANT MCCALLUM
MP FOR NORTHLAND

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We recognise that high charges alone do not necessarily establish a breach of the Commerce Act. However, where a community is dependent upon an essential service with no equivalent competing provider, we believe the level of charges and the market circumstances warrant examination.

Could you please advise whether this is a matter that could be referred to the Commerce Commission for consideration?

Kind regards

Grant McCallum
Member of Parliament for Northland

Wellington Office
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grant.mccallum@parliament.govt.nz



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