

Officials consider ferry route from Nova Scotia

By [Adam Leech](#)

July 06, 2009 2:00 AM

PORTSMOUTH — There is mutual interest in developing a year-round ferry service from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to Portsmouth, according to a contingent of Pease International Tradeport officials who visited the seaside Canadian town two weeks ago.

Pease Executive Director David Mullen, Port Director Geno Marconi and Port Committee Chairman Anthony McManus met with the Yarmouth Regional Industrial Commission and toured the port on June 24. Conceptual discussions on how the service might work centered around the need to offer both passenger and cargo services.

"Both Yarmouth and Portsmouth are interested in seeing if we can make it happen," said Mullen. "The key here is the mileage a truck has to travel to get around the (Bay of Fundy) to get to the U.S. market. It's a great distance. ... We think the economy of savings might be attractive, and that regular cargo will help sustain the highs and lows of passenger ferry service that is seasonal."

The next key step would be to secure a ferry company and shipping line that is interested in providing the service. For a typical ferry boat, the trip from port to port is 12 hours. Without use of a ferry, trucks would have to travel 800 miles.

Mullen said he will ask the Pease board of directors to sign a memorandum of cooperation — to explicitly state both sides interest — at its August 20 meeting.

If all goes well, Mullen said, there could be ferries arriving at the Market Street terminal as early as next spring.

"If we can do it before then that would be fine," said Mullen. "But these were preliminary discussions to see how we would work together to make this happen, but we all agreed it was in our mutual best interest to try."

The Portsmouth terminal, Mullen said, would require only minor upgrades to accommodate a ferry of the type being discussed. "Ro-ro" (Roll on/roll off) ferry ships are vessels designed to carry wheeled cargo on vehicles that can drive on and off the boat with the use of a hydraulic ramp.

The Port Committee is also expected to discuss the trip and the potential of ferry service at its July 9 meeting.