



# PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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## **DRBA Commission Alters Cape May – Lewes Ferry Fare Structure** *Modest Vehicle Fare Increase; Reduces Child Passenger Fares*

**NEW CASTLE, Del.** – The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) Commission approved a new fare schedule for the Cape May - Lewes Ferry (CMLF) at its monthly meeting held in the James Julian Boardroom at the Authority’s Administrative Complex in New Castle, Delaware. Effective April 1, 2024, the new ferry rate schedule is designed to improve farebox recovery, decrease the cost for families over time, and offer preferential fare treatment for multi-trip customers. Based on traffic data from 2023, the new fare structure is expected to net \$211,000 in additional revenue.

“After considering all public comments at our virtual presentation, we believe these modifications are reasonable and will create more multi-trip transactions while generating additional revenue for the Ferry system,” said Heath Gehrke, Director of Ferry Operations. “We’re also creating a Loyalty Rewards Members program similar to what the airlines offer. The goal is to reward those who frequently travel and encourage them to prebook online, which, in turn, helps us better to predict customer demand. In addition, Loyalty Rewards Members receive a free passenger (or driver) trip for every tenth trip taken.”

In 2023, the CMLF handled 276,436 vehicles and 746,430 passengers, including more than 10,000 who traveled via bicycle. The CMLF’s vehicle count, which not only eclipsed the pre-pandemic 2019 total of 271,751, was the most handled since 2010.

With the adoption of Resolution 24-02, the Commissioners approved the following:

- Increase for in-season vehicle and motorcycle fares by \$1 for standard size, (including per trip for discount books) \$2 for 26’ to 45’ vehicles and \$3 for >46’ vehicles.
- Decrease in passenger fares by \$1 for children ages 6 to 13 in-season.
- Increase in shuttle fares of \$2.
- Increase in the existing “No Show” fee from \$10 to \$26 to further incentivize canceling or modifying bookings vs. abandoning them; this allows the Ferry to sell space that would otherwise go unused and helps to predict demand.
- Adds a \$2 handling fee for “show-go” vehicle travel.

- Implements of an optional Priority Boarding fee of \$5 to allow (subject to capacity limitations) guests the option of priority staging for earlier boarding/disembarkation. (NOTE: This does not affect the current procedure for VIP and/or mobility impaired guests.)
- Enhances the Loyalty Rewards Program so guests are eligible to earn points redeemable for future travel, including a free passenger (or driver) trip for every tenth trip taken.

Passenger fares will not increase this year and have not increased since 2009. Off-season rates were also unaffected, as were “Return-Trip” fares – or fares purchased for the second leg of a round-trip when purchased at the time of the first leg. Additionally, CMLF continues to offer discounts for Seniors (62+), members of the Military and First Responders, as well as regular free travel for children under 6 years old and free for those aged 6-13 years during the off season.

### **About the Cape May-Lewes Ferry**

Owned and operated by the Delaware River and Bay Authority, the Cape May – Lewes Ferry is open year-round and has carried more than 50 million passengers since its inception on July 1, 1964. As an integral transportation system connecting the communities and economies on both sides of the Delaware Bay, the Ferry service is a significant catalyst for economic growth and regional tourism activity in New Jersey and Delaware. Its operations sustain over 4,000 jobs while generating tens of millions of dollars in local taxes and hundreds of millions in regional economic activity. For schedules and rates, please visit [www.CMLF.com](http://www.CMLF.com) or call 800-643-3779.