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We've had some changes in the ATM operation here that sound pretty good from an overview, but I thought that I might tell you what it looks like from the ground.

Fortuño was successful in subcontracting three new ferries for service between Fajardo - Vieques and Fajardo – Culebra. The company is PR Fast Ferries (or something like that). Reportedly, the ATM pays \$12M per year for the three boats and the crews to run them. Two boats are “crew” boats that have been used to shuttle crews to rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. They have four large engines and are fast. They hold 15 to 18 cars, about 65% of the typical boats used by the ATM. They carry up to 68 passengers and crew. The passenger ferry is a catamaran and holds up to 350 passengers and is super fast.

The cargo ferry schedule has been augmented to add the two fast ferries into the mix giving us five ferries per day for Monday through Thursday, four ferries on Friday, and three ferries both Saturday and Sunday. This doubles the 15 trips per week that we had before to 30. This is great! But, if you are the ATM and you want to see any extra effort fail, how do you throw a monkey wrench into the system?

1. The schedule. The first and last ferries of the day remain the same. The first ferry from Vieques leaves at 6:00AM and the last return to Vieques leaves at 4:30PM. They have added two more ferries in the middle of the day. There is NO improvement in our ability to do our business on the main island in a single day. The mid-day ferries are fine if you are doing a one way trip or dropping off a car, but improbable for any kind of appointment at Centro Medico, San Juan, or elsewhere outside of Fajardo. The last return trip should be at 8:00 or 8:30PM, giving us 4 more hours. Currently, the first and last ferries are packed full and the midday ferries are sparsely used.
2. The schedule. Culebra now has 30 cargo ferries scheduled per week, too. They currently have no need for these. Many during the day are nearly empty. Culebra has 20% of the population of Vieques, and they probably only need 20% of the cargo ferries. This is blatantly insane.
3. The schedule. With all of the new trips and boats crammed into such a tight time frame and with departures for Culebra and Vieques within one half hour of one another, the “brain trust” at the ATM has created an obvious and intentional traffic jam of their own making. So, the trip may be much faster (depending on the boat) but the wait at the dock for space to disembark is ridiculous. The added result: NOTHING IS ON TIME AFTER THE FIRST MORNING DEPARTURE. More chaos, more overtime!
4. The boats. The crew boats were not designed for carrying commercial trucks: their wooden decks won't support the weight (point loads). So, the

- new ferries are used for smaller vehicles. With proper scheduling, this wouldn't be a significant problem.
5. The boats. The new boats are of a very different design than our current fleet. They ride much higher resulting in a rear gate/ramp that is much higher than the docks. The ramps are very steep and difficult to impossible for some vehicles to manage.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the boats, the additional services could be very positive for us. The problem is that it is clear that the ATM personnel are sabotaging the effort from an operational position. They want the system to fail. They are still doing EVERYTHING to benefit themselves at our expense.

I know that the FTA had cut funds from the ATM last fall, but I don't know the current status. You were granting subsidies of about \$20M per year. There is interest here in doing a private ferry. Is it possible for a private system to receive a prorated portion of the subsidy based upon the percentage of passengers and/or cargo carried?

Well, that is the update. I have attached a copy of the presentation that I made to the ACLU regarding the systematic denial of access to the main island (caused and enforced) by the ATM on behalf of the residents of Vieques. I don't know whether this is going anywhere, but talks are continuing.

Thanks again,