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**FILED**

01/12/26

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A2509003

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Application of CATALINA  
CHANNEL EXPRESS, INC. (VCC-52),  
a California Corporation, to increase  
the baseline rates for its vessel  
common carrier service and to retain  
its existing Zone of Rate Freedom.

Application 25-09-003

**ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S SCOPING MEMO AND RULING**

This scoping memo and ruling sets forth the issues, need for hearing, schedule, category, and other matters necessary to scope this proceeding pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 1701.1 and Article 7 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules).

**1. Procedural Background**

On September 15, 2025, Catalina Channel Express, Inc. (VCC-52) (CCE) filed Application 25-09-003 requesting authorization from the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to modify its fares by increasing its baseline rates by approximately 20 percent for its scheduled and non-scheduled passenger vessel common carrier service between authorized Southern California mainland points and authorized points on Santa Catalina Island (Island) and between authorized points on the Island.<sup>1</sup> CCE also seeks to retain

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<sup>1</sup> CCE's address and telephone number are:  
385 E. Swinford St., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
San Pedro, CA 90731-1002  
310-519-7971

its currently authorized Zone of Rate Freedom (ZORF) of 20 percent above and below the proposed new baseline fares. Granting the application would increase CCE's base fares to the level currently being charged by CCE pursuant to its existing authority under its ZORF. CCE's current fares were set by Decision 25-06-046.

On September 19, 2025, CCE filed its compliance filing per Rule 3.2(b). A prehearing conference was held on December 16, 2025, to address the issues of law and fact, determine the need for hearing, set the schedule for resolving the matter, and address other matters as necessary. After considering the application and discussion at the prehearing conference, I have determined the issues and initial schedule of the proceeding to be set forth in this scoping memo.

## **2. Issues**

The issues to be determined or otherwise considered are:

1. Does the application comply with applicable law, rules, and Commission decisions including but not limited to Public Utilities (Pub. Util.) Code Section 454 and Rule 3.2?
2. Should the Commission authorize a general base fare increase of approximately 20 percent?
3. Does the application comply with the requirements for a ZORF pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 454.2 and prior Commission decisions?
4. Should the Commission continue to authorize a 20 percent ZORF?
5. Does the application comply with the California Environmental Quality Act?
6. Does this application align with or impact the achievements of any of the goals of the Commission's Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan?

**3. Need for Evidentiary Hearing**

There are no issues of material disputed fact. Accordingly, no evidentiary hearing is needed.

**4. Schedule**

This matter is submitted. The proposed decision is expected to be filed no later than 90 days from today for public review and comment pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 311(d) except that, if it grants the uncontested requested relief, public review and comment shall be waived pursuant to Rule 14.6(c)(2).

**5. Category of Proceeding and Ex Parte Restrictions**

This ruling confirms the Commission's preliminary determination<sup>2</sup> that this is a ratesetting proceeding. Accordingly, ex parte communications are restricted and must be reported pursuant to Article 8 of the Rules.

**6. Public Outreach**

Pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 1711(a), where feasible and appropriate, before determining the scope of the proceeding, the Commission sought the participation of those likely to be affected, including those likely to derive benefit from, and those potentially subject to, a decision in this proceeding. This matter was noticed on the Commission's daily calendar. Where feasible and appropriate, this matter was incorporated into engagements conducted by the Commission's External Affairs Division with local governments and other interested parties.

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution ALJ 176-3570 at page 1.

## **7. Intervenor Compensation**

Pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 1804(a)(1), a customer who intends to seek an award of compensation must file and serve a notice of intent to claim compensation by January 15, 2026, 30 days after the prehearing conference.

## **8. Response to Public Comments**

Parties may, but are not required to, respond to written comments received from the public. Parties may do so by posting such response using the “Add Public Comment” button on the “Public Comment” tab of the online docket card for the proceeding.

## **9. Public Advisor**

Any person interested in participating in this proceeding who is unfamiliar with the Commission’s procedures or has questions about the electronic filing procedures is encouraged to obtain more information at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/about-cpuc/divisions/news-and-public-information-office/public-advisors-office> or contact the Commission’s Public Advisor at 866-849-8390 or 866-836-7825 (TTY), or send an email to [public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov).

## **10. Filing, Service, and Service List**

The official service list has been created and is on the Commission’s website. Parties should confirm that their information on the service list is correct and serve notice of any errors on the Commission’s Process office, the service list, and the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). Persons may become a party pursuant to Rule 1.4.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The form to request additions and changes to the Service list may be found at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/administrative-law-judge-division/documents/additiontoservicelisttranscriptordercompliant.pdf>

When serving any document, each party must ensure that it is using the current official service list on the Commission's website.

This proceeding will follow the electronic service protocol set forth in Rule 1.10. All parties to this proceeding shall serve documents and pleadings using electronic mail, whenever possible, transmitted no later than 5:00 p.m., on the date scheduled for service to occur. The Rule 1.10 requirement of service on the ALJ of a paper copy of filed or served document is waived.

When serving documents on Commissioners or their personal advisors, whether or not they are on the official service list, parties must only provide electronic service. Parties must not send hard copies of documents to Commissioners or their personal advisors unless specifically instructed to do so.

Persons who are not parties but wish to receive electronic service of documents filed in the proceeding may contact the Process Office at [process\\_office@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:process_office@cpuc.ca.gov) to request addition to the "Information Only" category of the official service list pursuant to Rule 1.9(f).

The Commission encourages those who seek information-only status on the service list to consider the Commission's subscription service as an alternative. The subscription service sends individual notifications to each subscriber of formal e-filings tendered and accepted by the Commission. Notices sent through subscription service are less likely to be flagged by spam or other filters. Notifications can be for a specific proceeding, a range of documents and daily or weekly digests.

#### **11. Receiving Electronic Service from the Commission**

Parties and other persons on the service list are advised that it is the responsibility of each person or entity on the service list for Commission

proceedings to ensure their ability to receive emails from the Commission. Please add “@cpuc.ca.gov” to your email safe sender list and update your email screening practices, settings and filters to ensure receipt of emails from the Commission.

## **12. Assignment of Proceeding**

Matthew Baker is the assigned Commissioner and David R. Van Dyken is the assigned ALJ .

**IT IS RULED** that:

1. The scope of this proceeding is described above and is adopted.
2. The schedule of this proceeding is set forth above and is adopted.
3. Evidentiary hearing is not needed.
4. The category of the proceeding is Ratesetting.

Dated January 12, 2026, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ MATTHEW BAKER

Matthew Baker  
Assigned Commissioner