



# PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

James Salmon  
302.571.6409

## **Cape May – Lewes Ferry Seeks New Food and Retail Operator in Cape May *Exit Zero Hospitality and Ferry Mutually Agree to End Partnership***

**CAPE MAY, NJ** – Today, Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) officials announced the issuance of a request for qualifications (RFQ) seeking a concessionaire to operate the existing restaurant and associated facilities and venues (formerly Exit Zero Ferry Park) located at Cape May- Lewes Ferry Terminal in Cape May, New Jersey. Proposals are due on Friday, November 3, 2023.

The goal of this process is to enter into a lease agreement with a restaurateur to operate the food and retail business at the Cape May Ferry Terminal in time for the peak 2024 summer season. Interested private operators are highly encouraged to request a tour of the facility as indicated in the RFQ,

“We appreciate the effort, energy and vision the Exit Zero team brought to this venture and the timing on the mutual decision to part ways provides ample time to engage in a thorough process to find a new partner,” said Heath Gehrke, Director of Ferry Operations. “Our focus is to identify and select a concessionaire with relevant experience and a strong track record in developing and managing exciting and successful food and beverage concepts.”

The multi-outlet terminal operation currently features roughly 280 indoor and 130 outdoor seats, all offering panoramic views of the scenic Delaware Bay as well as arriving and departing ferry vessels. The preceding tenant has been in place since mid-2021, investing more than \$1 million in capital improvements onsite. The concessionaire will manage the indoor/outdoor restaurant; a second-floor outlet, which was previously used as event space and can seat over 150 people; and an outdoor patio with waterfront sunset views, the Southwest Patio and the Bayside Green. The concessionaire is also expected to operate the coffee and retail gift shop (formerly Café 64) in the terminal, and will have access to book the Gallery, a 1,509-square foot meeting room.

The DRBA hopes to find an experienced F&B operator who will improve performance and enhance this scenic, waterfront venue with exciting concepts. This same objective was successfully completed in 2019 at the Lewes Ferry Terminal when the facility was leased to and

re-envisioned by concessionaire, Grain on The Rocks. Despite the challenges of operating during the COVID-19 pandemic for most of 2020, the concessionaire exceeded their original revenue goals, and continue to perform well, aided by the large, outdoor dining component, which the Cape May side also offers.

Please note that this RFQ does not extend to the food and beverage concession operations on the passenger ferries or those located in the Lewes Ferry Terminal on the Delaware side of the Bay.

Like the two previous RFQs, the DRBA has retained REVPAR International, Inc. to consult and guide the agency through this process. REVPAR International, Inc. is a full-service advisory and asset management firm exclusively dedicated to the hospitality and tourism industries. With corporate offices in Washington D.C., Miami and Denver, REVPAR has more than 25 years of experience as one of the industry's best-known full-service advisory and asset management firms exclusively dedicated to the hospitality and tourism industries.

**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.