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**BC FERRIES' SPIRIT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA RETURNS TO SERVICE
TOMORROW**
**Vessel recently completed a mid-life upgrade including conversion to operate on
natural gas**

VICTORIA – The Spirit of British Columbia, one of BC Ferries' two largest vessels, returns to service tomorrow on the Metro Vancouver (Tsawwassen) – Victoria (Swartz Bay) route following the completion of a mid-life upgrade. The Spirit of Vancouver Island will undergo a mid-life upgrade from fall 2018 to spring 2019.

The vessel is the first of two vessels to be converted to operate on natural gas, which is much cleaner for the environment than marine diesel. BC Ferries expects to reduce CO2 emissions by 12,500 tonnes annually, the equivalent of taking approximately 2,500 vehicles off the road per year by using natural gas to fuel the two Spirit Class vessels. Simultaneously fuel costs will be reduced by millions when both ships are in service operating on natural gas.

BC Ferries is a leader in North America when it comes to clean and innovative technology that lowers emissions. The Spirit of British Columbia is the first passenger vessel in the world to refuel liquefied natural gas via delivery on a fully enclosed vehicle deck. The Salish Class vessels introduced last year were the first passenger vessels in the world to fuel liquefied natural gas on an open vehicle deck via delivery truck. Both of these innovations were conceived by BC Ferries and designed, engineered and built by BC Ferries and its partners. The natural gas is provided by FortisBC and can be reliably delivered in B.C., which supports the local economy. These innovations saved BC Ferries' customers more than \$100 million in infrastructure costs that would have otherwise been required and have proven significant environmental benefits.

“The Spirit of British Columbia returns to service with clean technology that reduces both our environmental footprint and cost of operations,” said Mark Collins, BC Ferries' President & CEO. “The two Spirit Class vessels consume approximately 16 per cent of our fuel annually. The conversion of our two largest ships in the fleet, along with the introduction of our three new natural gas-fuelled Salish Class vessels last year, goes a long way to improving the sustainability of our operations and affordability for ferry users.”

Other upgrades include the renewal of navigation equipment, propulsion equipment components including gearboxes, rudders, steering system, bow thrusters, propeller blades, LED lighting, more efficient air conditioning equipment to reduce energy consumption and four marine evacuation systems.

In addition to the natural gas conversion, BC Ferries upgraded the vessel's passenger areas with new carpeting, furniture upholstery, new table tops, refurbishment of all public washrooms, as

well as an additional washroom on Deck 5. BC Ferries added a new Arbutus Coffee Bar on Deck 6 and doubled the size of Passages onboard retail store.

The Spirit of British Columbia is the first of the two Spirit Class vessels through the mid-life upgrade and conversion to clean technology. The Spirit of Vancouver Island will follow and complete the upgrade and natural gas conversion from the fall of 2018 through the spring of 2019. This schedule will allow for the vessel, the largest in the fleet, to be back in operation during the summer months when traffic is at its highest.

“Natural gas is the world’s cleanest burning fossil fuel and using LNG in deep-sea ships provides an opportunity to significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions and air quality on a global scale,” said Roger Dall’Antonia, president and CEO of FortisBC. “In collaboration with BC Ferries, we developed a first-in-the-world proprietary tanker truck technology to deliver fuel while on board the vessel. Innovative solutions like this help make it easier for transportation customers to make the switch to LNG.” FortisBC has been performing approximately a dozen or so onboard marine bunkering per week since December 2016, and will be reaching a milestone of 500 performed by the end of this week.

Passenger amenities on board the Spirit of British Columbia include: The Pacific Buffet, Coastal Café, Arbutus Coffee Bar, Passages onboard retail store, work stations, mobile charging stations, Kids Play Areas, a number of passenger lounge areas and an enclosed Pet Area on Deck 4. The ship complies with accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities when travelling by ferry, including an Induction loop hearing system installed in the Deck 5 forward passenger lounge and at key customer interaction points.

BC Ferries looks forward to welcoming its customers on board the Spirit of British Columbia once again.

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Backgrounder and photos attached.

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Backgrounder

- The Spirit Class vessels were built in 1993 and 1994 in Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia, by Integrated Ferry Constructors and have an approximate service life of 50 years
- The Spirit Class vessels measure 167 metres in length
- Each vessel can carry approximately 358 vehicles across two car decks and up to 2,100 passengers and crew with a service speed of 19.5 knots
- The vessel is equipped with four marine evacuation systems with life rafts, four rescue boats, smoke and natural gas detection alarms, and state-of-the-art fire suppression systems
- Both ships service the Metro Vancouver – Victoria (Tsawwassen – Swartz Bay) run, which is the busiest route in the fleet

Photos



Passages onboard retail store offers a west coast inspired shopping experience.



The new Arbutus Coffee Bar is located on Deck 6 of the vessel.



New mobile charging stations are located throughout the passenger lounge areas.