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## **BC FERRIES ENCOURAGES SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS TRAVELLERS TO PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY**

VICTORIA – As the hot summer weather conditions continue, BC Ferries is making special public service announcements on the vessels that service the Southern Gulf Islands to encourage travellers to practice wildfire safety and water conservation. The Southern Gulf Islands are currently experiencing extremely dry conditions and are currently under a high wildfire risk, which is expected to move to extreme soon.

“BC Ferries makes these announcements to help ensure our customers are familiar with fire safety practices both on board our vessels and in the Southern Gulf Islands communities,” said Corrine Storey, BC Ferries’ Vice President of Customer Services. “Last year, local stakeholders asked us to make these announcements and with fire conditions at very dry levels again this year, our crew want to contribute to overall fire safety on the Southern Gulf Islands.”

With the Southern Gulf Islands under a high wildfire risk, wildfires can start very easily and spread quickly. Open fires are prohibited everywhere and work restrictions apply. BC Ferries and local stakeholders are asking travellers and residents to use the utmost caution with cigarette butts, barbeques and all other heat producing items. Water conservation practices are also encouraged. Travellers are asked to contact the local authorities of the island they are travelling to for specific regulations and requirements.

For the past 10 years, BC Ferries has also hosted Pender Island Fire Rescue at the Swartz Bay terminal. On Friday afternoons during the summer, Pender Island Fire Rescue brings an antique fire truck to the terminal and firefighters provide information to customers heading to the Southern Gulf Islands regarding fire safety and the fire ban.

“Our partnership with BC Ferries allows us to spread our fire prevention message to the maximum number of Southern Gulf Islands visitors,” said Mike Dine, Deputy Fire Chief with Pender Island Fire Rescue. “BC Ferries’ onboard announcements also help heighten public awareness of the current fire danger. We have been doing information sessions at Swartz Bay terminal since the summer of 2007 and really appreciate the support from BC Ferries. We encourage everyone to practice fire safety this summer to help protect our province.”

Under contract to the Province of British Columbia, BC Ferries is the service provider responsible for the delivery of safe, efficient and dependable ferry service along coastal British Columbia.

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