

For Immediate Release
17-046

June 13, 2017

**BC FERRIES RECEIVES STRONG PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LEVELS
Over 3,200 Online Responses Regarding Schedules for the Sunshine Coast and Bowen Island
received**

VICTORIA – In the first 21 days of its public engagement process with the Sunshine Coast and Bowen Island, BC Ferries received an above average response rate of 11 per cent, or 3,200 responses, through an online survey regarding schedule preferences. BC Ferries is also hosting stakeholder interviews, community workshops, scheduled events, and engagement opportunities in the community and at Horseshoe Bay and Langdale terminals to directly open a dialogue with community members. The engagement process has extended from Bowen Island to the southern Sunshine Coast up to Powell River.

“We are pleased to be hearing from so many members of the Sunshine Coast, Powell River and Bowen Island communities,” said Mark Collins, BC Ferries’ President & CEO. “We care about the reliability of sailing times for these communities and the effect it has on our customers’ lives. We are working hard to respond, where we can, to the themes that are emerging, and have been adjusting our engagement approach based on feedback we’ve already received.”

Although only midway through the engagement process, some recurring themes have emerged from the feedback, such as the desire for hourly service on the Langdale route and improved reliability of sailing times, as well as the importance of commuter and school sailing times to communities.

“We know the hourly service on the Horseshoe Bay – Langdale route this spring was very well received and understand our customers’ desire for this service. One of our long-term priorities is working on terminal infrastructure and vessel changes that will help us deliver better service to this route, but that option is several years away from being possible,” says Collins. “At the moment we don’t have the appropriate vessels and the right terminal infrastructure to support hourly service on an ongoing basis, but we hear the community’s message loud and clear and we are working on it. Right now we are concerned with the reliability of sailing times on the Horseshoe Bay – Langdale and Horseshoe Bay – Snug Cove routes, and we need to make a change to improve this issue.”

Another common theme from the engagement process has been community concern about the schedule examples being shown in the online survey. “We want to assure customers that the schedules shown in the survey were provided to help people understand what changes could look like, and should be considered as examples only,” says Collins. “Final schedules will be developed using the input we receive through this engagement process.”

The engagement process has included feedback from residents, commuters, cottage owners, businesses, service providers, tourists, and vacationers from the Northern and Southern Sunshine Coast and Bowen Island. BC Ferries will develop potential schedules based on public feedback after the current engagement process concludes in early-July. BC Ferries will come back to communities to report on the results of engagement and present schedule options later this summer.

“The Southern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) is pleased that BC Ferries heard our concerns last year about a proposed schedule change for the Horseshoe Bay – Langdale route, and made the decision to use a broader public engagement process on scheduling changes,” said Diana Mumford, Chair of the Southern Sunshine Coast FAC. “We would especially like to thank all the ferry users who have responded to the online survey, have participated in the focus group workshops, or interacted with outreach opportunities at ferry terminals and community events. Having attended two focus group meetings, I know the discussions have been both broad-based and frank. The FAC is hopeful that the feedback provided will guide BC Ferries to a revised schedule that best meets the needs of a majority of the Horseshoe Bay – Langdale ferry users.”

BC Ferries encourages all customers to voice their opinion on the Sunshine Coast and Bowen Island schedule by filling out the online survey or participating at events in the communities. More details are available at bcferries.com/about/ontime-sc/.

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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