

For Immediate Release
19-058

October 21, 2019

BC FERRIES REPLACES SKEENA QUEEN WITH QUEEN OF CUMBERLAND ON SWARTZ BAY TO SALT SPRING ISLAND ROUTE DURING MID-LIFE UPGRADE
Bowen Queen to be used over holiday period

VICTORIA – BC Ferries announced today the vessel serving the Swartz Bay – Salt Spring Island route, the Skeena Queen, will be undergoing a mid-life upgrade from Oct. 28, 2019 to mid-March, 2020. This mid-life upgrade is necessary to provide required maintenance on the vessel and enhance the customer experience.

Queen of Cumberland Replaces Skeena Queen during Mid-Life Upgrade

BC Ferries will replace the Skeena Queen (92 Automobile Equivalent – AEQ) with the Queen of Cumberland (112 AEQ) for the majority of the time, providing equivalent capacity on the regular schedule. The Queen of Cumberland has vehicle ramps, unlike the Skeena Queen, and some customers may be loaded onto an upper level ramp. Customers must exit their vehicle when the ramp is in motion. With one ramp, the Queen of Cumberland can load 94 AEQ. The crew will mainly use one ramp because the regular schedule does not allow enough time to use two ramps, and over-height and commercial vehicles cannot be loaded underneath the ramps. BC Ferries will only use the ramp when necessary to fit as many vehicles as possible, such as the busy morning sailings out of Fulford Harbour on Salt Spring Island and busy afternoon sailings out of Swartz Bay.

The Queen of Cumberland has an elevator to provide access to the second level lounge. The Queen of Cumberland also features a Coast Café Express. Vehicles will be loaded differently onto the Queen of Cumberland, with commercial traffic separated from regular vehicle traffic. Customers will still be loaded on a first come, first served basis as they arrive at the terminal. During the first week the Queen of Cumberland is on the route, BC Ferries will have additional staff and signage at Fulford Harbour Terminal on Salt Spring Island to help customers have a smooth sailing.

Bowen Queen Replaces Queen of Cumberland During Holiday Period

From Dec. 20, 2019 to Jan. 1, 2020, the Bowen Queen (61 AEQ) will be on the Swartz Bay to Salt Spring Island route. The Queen of Cumberland is needed on the Swartz Bay to Southern Gulf Islands route because the Salish Raven will provide supplemental service between Tsawwassen and the Southern Gulf Islands due to forecasted traffic increases.

The Bowen Queen loads and transits faster than the Queen of Cumberland. It will do two additional round trips per day on the Swartz Bay to Salt Spring Island route, so the maximum number of customers can be accommodated. However, BC Ferries expects certain runs will still be popular. During the time the Bowen Queen is in place, BC Ferries will have a revised schedule with

modified sailing times. The revised schedule is necessary to accommodate the most customers possible.

Due to the smaller capacity of the Bowen Queen, customers travelling in vehicles from Fulford Harbour on Salt Spring Island will experience longer lineups. Due to the revised ferry schedule, customers connecting with buses may see longer waits upon arrival at the terminal.

Salish Raven Replaces Queen of Cumberland on Swartz Bay to Southern Gulf Islands Route

The Salish Raven (138 AEQ) will replace the Queen of Cumberland on the Swartz Bay to Southern Gulf Islands Route during the Skeena Queen's midlife upgrade. The Salish Raven has greater vehicle capacity and a Coastal Café with hot food options.

Travel Tips for Customers

- During the Skeena Queen's mid-life upgrade, customers are encouraged to arrive early at the terminal to get on the sailing of their choice.
- To avoid waits that may occur travelling through Swartz Bay, Metro Vancouver customers are encouraged to reserve early for travel on the Tsawwassen to Southern Gulf Islands route. There will be additional sailings on the Tsawwassen to Southern Gulf Islands route during the December holiday period.
- Crews will load the vessels in an efficient way, however some delays may still occur, particularly when the Bowen Queen is in place over the December holiday period.
- Customers may want to do their holiday shopping early, or plan their holiday travel around the dates the Bowen Queen is on the route.

BC Ferries appreciates customers' patience and understanding as this necessary mid-life upgrade is conducted on the Skeena Queen. The vessel will be undergoing its mid-life upgrade at BC Ferries' Fleet Maintenance Unit in Richmond, B.C. The upgrade includes modernized amenities including new furniture, air conditioning, expanded customer washrooms and additional benches on the exterior deck. The navigation, communication and electrical systems will be improved to enhance safety and reliability. The Skeena Queen was built in 1997 and requires this mid-life upgrade to provide another 20 years of safe and reliable service in BC Ferries' fleet.

- 30 -

Media Contact:
BC Ferries, Communications
Victoria: (250) 978-1267

Customer Contact:
Victoria: (250) 386-3431
Toll-free: 1-888-BCFERRY (1-888-223-3779)