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## **SPIRIT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA REMOVED FROM SERVICE TO UNDERGO MID-LIFE UPGRADE**

**Vessel will also be converted to operate on liquefied natural gas**

VICTORIA – BC Ferries announced the Spirit of British Columbia has been removed from service as of today to transit to BC Ferries’ Fleet Maintenance Unit in Richmond to prepare for departure to Remontowa Ship Repair Yard S.A. of Gdansk, Poland under its own power on Sept. 12 for completion of a mid-life upgrade.

While the vessel is at the Fleet Maintenance Unit, several preparations will occur including the installation of a wave break on the main car deck forward section, marine pilot access arrangements and voyage logistical provisions. Other tasks include safety inspections and de-storing of vessel equipment that will not be required during the transit or at the shipyard site. The transit of the vessel should take approximately 42 days, depending on weather. For those who want to join the voyage “virtually”, customers can track the ship’s progress including course, position and speed at [vesselfinder.com](http://vesselfinder.com).

In 2016, BC Ferries awarded a contract to Remontowa Ship Repair Yard S.A. of Gdansk, Poland to conduct the Spirit Class mid-life upgrades, which include the conversion of both vessels to dual-fuel so they can operate on liquefied natural gas or ultra-low sulphur marine diesel. BC Ferries conducted an extensive competitive bidding process to ensure the company secured the best value bid. One shipyard from B.C. participated in the RFP process; however, they opted to withdraw from the process before the award decision. Remontowa Ship Repair Yard is the largest ship repair yard in Poland and ranks amongst the largest in Europe.

“Last fiscal year, we spent approximately \$100.2 million on diesel fuel of which the two Spirit Class vessels consumed approximately 15.5 per cent,” said Mark Wilson, BC Ferries’ Vice President of Engineering. “Liquefied natural gas costs significantly less than marine diesel. The conversion of the two largest ships in the fleet along with the three new dual-fuel Salish Class vessels that all entered service this year will go a long way to help both our environmental footprint and with fare affordability for our customers.”

BC Ferries expects to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 12,000 tonnes annually, which is the equivalent of taking approximately 2,500 vehicles off the road per year, by using natural gas to fuel the Spirit Class vessels.

In addition to the liquefied natural gas conversion, the vessel’s passenger areas will be upgraded with new carpeting, refurbished washrooms, expanded gift shop and an additional washroom on Deck 5 as well as a new coffee bar on Deck 6. Upgrades to the passenger elevators

include renewal of mechanical and electrical drive components, emergency communication system and electrical and control systems.

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

The Spirit of British Columbia will be the first ship through the mid-life upgrade and conversion process, with the upgrade being completed from fall of 2017 through the spring of 2018. The Spirit of Vancouver Island will follow the next year from the fall of 2018 through the spring of 2019. This schedule will allow for these two vessels, the largest in the fleet, to be back in operation during the summer months when traffic is at its highest.

The Spirit of British Columbia was built in 1993 and the Spirit of Vancouver Island was built in 1994. BC Ferries plans to operate these two vessels for another 25 years. Both ships service the Metro Vancouver – Victoria (Tsawwassen – Swartz Bay) run, which is the busiest route in the fleet.

- 30 -

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