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BC FERRIES CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH THE RETURN OF THE SPIRIT OF VANCOUVER ISLAND

Vessel returns to service after a mid-life upgrade including a conversion to natural gas

VICTORIA – Just in time for Earth Day, the Spirit of Vancouver Island returns to service today following its mid-life upgrade, with the ability to now operate on liquefied natural gas (LNG). The ship is the second Spirit Class vessel in the fleet to complete the conversion from diesel to clean LNG.

“With both Spirit Class vessels now operating on LNG, BC Ferries expects to reduce CO₂ emissions by 12,500 tonnes per year, or the equivalent of removing 2,500 cars from the road every year,” according to Mark Collins, President and CEO of BC Ferries. “Operating these vessels on natural gas is both environmentally sound and good for affordable travel. We expect to reduce fuel costs by millions of dollars by running these vessels on LNG.”

The Spirit of Vancouver Island services the Vancouver (Tsawwassen) – Victoria (Swartz Bay) route and completed the conversion this past winter and spring. Last summer, its sister ship, The Spirit of British Columbia, successfully completed the same mid-life upgrade. These conversions represent a significant investment in clean technology.

“BC Ferries is reducing our environmental footprint,” Collins says. “We are safeguarding the environment, while finding new ways to improve the sustainability of our operations.”

BC Ferries’ adoption of clean technology has been recognized by its international peers. Earlier this spring, Shippax honoured the company with the [Shippax Retrofit Award](#) for completing the conversion of the Spirit of British Columbia from diesel to liquefied natural gas. The role of being an industry leader as it comes to the use of innovative technology that lowers emissions is a role BC Ferries takes seriously. The Spirit of British Columbia was the first passenger vessel in the world to fuel LNG on a totally-enclosed deck.

BC Ferries now has five ships that operate on cleaner natural gas – two Spirit Class and three Salish Class ferries. The Baynes Sound Connector, the cable-ferry from Buckley Bay to Denman Island, has dramatically reduced that route’s environmental impact. Since it was introduced in 2016, diesel consumption and associated air emissions on that run have dropped by approximately 50 per cent. Looking ahead, BC Ferries will introduce hybrid-electric ferries to serve inter-island routes next year. To learn more about BC Ferries’ long-term environmental strategies, see our [Clean Technology Adoption Plan](#).

Highlights of the Spirit of Vancouver Island's extensive upgrade and conversion to clean technology include safety, mechanical, environmental, and customer service improvements:

- Conversion to run on liquefied natural gas
- Installation of more efficient air conditioning equipment to reduce energy consumption
- Upgrades to the passenger area with new carpeting and an additional washroom
- Expansion of Passages store and addition of the new Arbutus Coffee Bar
- Renewal of propulsion equipment components including rudders, steering system, bow thrusters, propellers and gearboxes
- New machinery control system, navigation system, internal communication system and safety and evacuation systems

The mid-life upgrade prepares the vessel for another 25 years of safe, reliable service. The work was completed at Remontowa Ship Repair Yard S.A. in Gdansk, Poland. The Spirit of Vancouver Island has been servicing the Vancouver (Tsawwassen) – Victoria (Swartz Bay) run, the busiest route in the fleet, since 1993.

Photos attached

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An expanded Passages store carries a wide variety of outerwear and fashions for men and women as well as an expanded selection of homewares, gifts and jewellery



The new Arbutus Coffee bar offers specialty coffees including flavoured lattes, Americanos and iced mochas as well as fresh-from-the-oven baked goods and plenty of tableside outlets for charging devices



Newly upgraded Spirit of Vancouver Island joins Spirit of British Columbia off Tsawwassen terminal – both vessels now operating on liquefied natural gas