

For Immediate Release
16-012

March 2, 2016

QUEEN OF OAK BAY BACK IN SERVICE WITH UPGRADED PET AREAS **Work on other BC Ferries' pet areas underway for major routes**

VICTORIA – The Queen of Oak Bay recently returned to service after the completion of its three-quarter life upgrade at BC Ferries' in-house fleet maintenance unit in Richmond. The 1981-built vessel serves the Horseshoe Bay – Departure Bay route and has had significant upgrades to its pet areas and many other areas of the ship.

Other upgrades to the Queen of Oak Bay include replacement of the steering gear system, upgrades to the bridge and refurbished passenger accommodations. These improvements include an expansion of Passages Giftshop with change rooms, total refresh of the Coast Café Express, the addition of a family room and additional power outlets with USB ports. To assist customers with hearing impairments, BC Ferries has installed an induction loop hearing system on this vessel. This will be the new standard for the fleet going forward.

After receiving feedback from customers travelling with pets, BC Ferries reached out to the Society of British Columbia Veterinarians for some guidance on how best to make on board improvements. As a result, the company has developed a new standard for pet areas including kennels to enable customers to leave their pets and enjoy the onboard amenities, radiant heating, comfortable benches as well as pet and pet owner hygiene products. In addition, the upgraded pet areas are to include new PA speakers to ensure important safety announcements can be heard.

Further upgrades to pet areas are planned for the other ships in the fleet, with recent upgrades on the Coastal Renaissance, Queen of Alberni and Queen of Cowichan. The Queen of New Westminster, Queen of Cumberland, Spirit of Vancouver Island and Spirit of British Columbia will have upgraded pet areas by this spring. BC Ferries worked in conjunction with the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association on the process to design the improved pet areas. For more information about travelling with pets visit http://www.bcferrries.com/travel_planning/travel-with-pets.

“We recognize the importance of comfort and amenities for our customers travelling with pets, so we undertook a review of all our pet areas to identify the improvements needed and make them a priority during refit season,” said Corrine Storey, BC Ferries' Vice President of Customer Services. “These new upgrades will improve the travel experience not only for our customers, but for our furry friends as well.”

“We were approached by BC Ferries to help improve the transportation of pets aboard the ferry fleet,” said Dr. Rob Ashburner of the Society of British Columbia Veterinarians (SBCV). “We've been working with personnel from BC Ferries on the design and maintenance of

pet-friendly areas aboard the ferries and in developing policies and procedures for the safe transport of pets on the ships.”

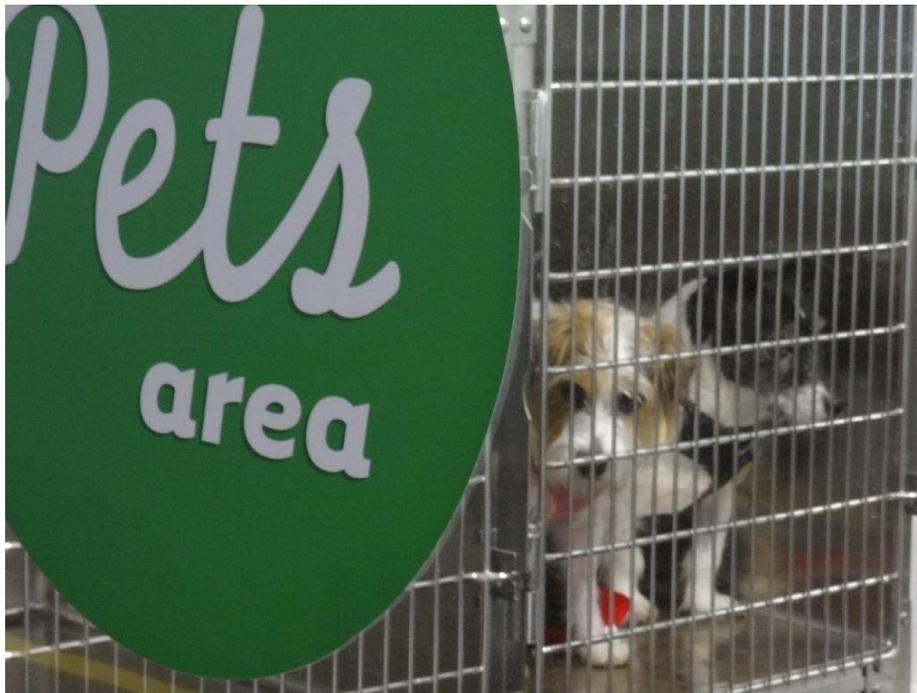
Under contract to the Province of British Columbia, BC Ferries is the service provider responsible for the delivery of safe, efficient and dependable ferry service along coastal British Columbia.

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Photos attached



Jack Russell Terriers Fiona and Petey check out the kennels in one of the upgraded pet areas on the Queen of Oak Bay

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