



NEWS RELEASE

For release June 10, 2021

Regulator seeks public comments on BC Ferries' proposal to electrify vessels

VICTORIA — The British Columbia Ferry Commission (BCFC) – the independent regulator that oversees BC Ferries – is inviting public comments on BC Ferries' proposal to upgrade its Island class vessels to battery-electric power. These are the first ships proposed by BC Ferries for full electrification.

The Proposal:

Under the Island Class Electrification Program (ICEP), BC Ferries would modify six diesel-electric hybrid ferries to enable them to operate exclusively in battery-electric mode, without using their diesel engines. The nine terminals along their routes – Powell River to Texada Island, Nanaimo to Gabriola Island, Campbell River to Quadra Island, and Port McNeill to Malcolm and Cormorant Islands – would be upgraded to provide shore-based rapid charging capability.

Two Island class ferries have been in operation since 2020; two are currently en route to BC from the shipyard in Romania; two more are under construction and expected to enter service early in 2022. Electrification of the first vessel would be complete in September 2022. By October 2024, upgrades to all six vessels and nine terminals would be complete.

According to BC Ferries' proposal, the Island Class Electrification Program would create 660 jobs, reduce operating costs, and provide quieter, cleaner service, with an annual reduction in BC Ferries' total GHG emissions of six percent.

BC Ferries will only carry out the Island Class Electrification Program at this time if granted external funding from the Government of Canada.

The Approval Process:

Under the *Coastal Ferry Act*, BC Ferries must gain approval from the BC Ferry Commission before incurring any major capital expenditure. Approval rests on the expenditure being reasonable, prudent, and consistent with the current Coastal Ferry Services Contract and BC Ferries' long-term capital plan.

"In reviewing any application for a major capital expenditure, we also consider the public interest," says Commissioner Sheldon Stoilen. "This includes ensuring that British Columbians can continue to enjoy safe, affordable and reliable coastal ferry service. We look forward to receiving comments from the public on this proposal."

[BC Ferries' application](#) for approval of the Island Class Electrification Program can be found at bcferrycommission.ca.

To Submit Your Thoughts:

Public comments must be received by June 30, 2021. Comments can be emailed to info@bcferrycommission.ca or mailed to:

BC Ferry Commission
PO Box 9279 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9J7

About the British Columbia Ferry Commission:

The BC Ferry Commission (BCFC) serves a regulatory and oversight role over BC Ferries, including approving major capital expenditures and setting price caps on the maximum allowable annual increase in the average fare levels that BC Ferries is permitted to charge its customers. The BC Ferry Commission is independent of both the provincial government (which sets ferry service levels) and BC Ferries (which provides coastal ferry service under the Coastal Ferry Services Contract).

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