

For Immediate Release
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**BC FERRIES CONFIRMS PORT HARDY-BELLA COOLA DIRECT SERVICE TO
OPERATE SEPTEMBER 16 TO OCTOBER 11
Northern Adventure to provide two round-trips per week**

VICTORIA – The introduction of the direct service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola that BC Ferries intended to begin on June 19, later delayed to July 20, will now begin on September 16. This delay is a result of the uncertain date of completion of refit work on the vessel acquired for the service, the Northern Sea Wolf.

Giving our customers travel certainty during this time, BC Ferries will redeploy the MV Northern Adventure at its earliest availability to provide two round-trip sailings per week from September 16 until the end of the summer season on October 11.

“First and foremost, we want to apologize to all affected by this delay,” said Mark Collins, BC Ferries’ President and Chief Executive Officer. “We recognize this has a major impact on our customers and the tourism businesses in the North Island and Central Coast regions. We are all disappointed that this service could not be started earlier in the 2018 season.”

Collins continues “The Northern Adventure is a large and proven vessel in our northern services, with speed and comfort that passengers will appreciate. This is the earliest date the vessel could be made available for the Bella Coola direct service.”

As background, in 2016 the Province announced a direct seasonal service between Port Hardy and Bella Coola that would start in the summer of 2018. To meet that timeline, BC Ferries purchased a used vessel, as a new vessel takes three years to design and construct. The company searched the used vessel market and purchased the most suitable ship available, which was later named the Northern Sea Wolf. However, it required substantial upgrades to bring it up to BC Ferries’ and Transport Canada’s standards of safety and reliability, and this work will not be complete prior to approximately September 30.

Customers who have reservations for direct sailings between Port Hardy and Bella Coola for dates between July 20 and September 15 are affected by the delay being announced today. Customers with reservations on September 16 or later are not affected.

For affected customers, travel plans will be changed in one of two ways. Either their travel will be re-booked on the indirect ferry service via Bella Bella, or reservations will be cancelled and fully refunded. Space is limited on the indirect service and all travelers may not be accommodated.

Customers whose bookings are cancelled will be offered the option to sail after September 15. If this is not convenient for them, they will receive complimentary travel between Port Hardy and Bella Coola in the 2019 service season.

Over the coming week, BC Ferries' Customer Care team will be contacting affected customers to provide information and options. Customers booked through a tour operator or travel agent will be contacted by those agents.

BC Ferries sincerely apologizes for the inconvenience this delay has caused its customers and the communities.

– 30 –

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