

Wilderness Tourism Association



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BC FERRIES CUTS NEGATIVELY IMPACT TOURISM

For Immediate Release

(Campbell River, BC; November 21, 2013) The BC Government's plans to reduce BC Ferries service on both minor and major routes is causing great concern in BC's tourism industry.

"These short-sighted cost saving measures will greatly impact coastal tourism operations and the economic vibrancy of those communities that are serviced by BC Ferries," says Jim DeHart, President of the Wilderness Tourism Association of BC.

"Our main concern is regarding the lack of certainty these plans create for the tourism industry," said DeHart. "In many cases 2014 tour packages, that are dependent on BC Ferries, have already been sold and our tour operators are now marketing BC tours for 2015 and beyond. With no reasonable transportation/access alternative, these 2014 tours will need to be rescheduled or cancelled causing significant losses in revenues. Inbound tour operators will stop selling coastal tourism packages due the uncertainty of access, which will have a significant impact to our tourism product and competitive marketing position."

Tourism is a key contributor to British Columbia's GDP and a significant private sector employer for BC. It has also been identified as a growth sector able to make a significant contribution to jobs and wealth creation in the future. Direct tourist expenditures on nature-based tourism products in BC is approximately \$1.5 billion dollars and provides the equivalent of over 26,000 full time jobs. Nature based tourism is also a major driver of BC's \$13 billion plus tourism industry.

"The BC Government needs to be planning any changes to BC Ferry services years in advance, and in consultation with the tourism industry," said DeHart. "Only with this kind of planning can the tourism industry continue to be in a competitive position in the expanding global marketplace, and contribute fully to the province's future growth."

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