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BC FERRIES RESPONDS TO TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD REPORT ON QUEEN OF SURREY FIRE

Main concerns cited in report addressed by company two and a half years ago

VICTORIA – BC Ferries issued the following statement today in response to the release of the Transportation Safety Board's report into the May 2003 Queen of Surrey engine room fire.

BC Ferries' President and CEO David L. Hahn says the company welcomes the findings of the Transportation Safety Board (TSB) report as it underscores the importance of maintaining BC Ferries' safety standards to the highest level possible. He noted that TSB recommendations call for an improved industry wide standard for passive and active fire protection systems. Mr. Hahn said that while BC Ferries complies with all current regulations regarding fire protection systems, he welcomes these industry wide recommendations and the company will work with all parties to support this action.

In responding to the report, Mr. Hahn said the main concerns cited in the TSB report were responded to two and a half years ago by BC Ferries. Shortly after the May 2003 fire, the company moved to address the cause of the fire and the problems associated with the onboard CO2 fire suppression system. In the months following the fire, BC Ferries implemented the following actions fleetwide:

- Inspected all CO2 fire suppression systems to ensure they were operating effectively and a proper testing program was in place
- Replaced any copper fuel lines with steel piping
- Ensured all manifolds had heat shields and fire protection taping in place
- Undertook a program to install structural fire protection in C-class engine rooms during their mid-life upgrades
- Conducted a review of its engineering documentation practices within the company's safety management system (SMS)

Mr. Hahn said he is pleased the TSB report acknowledges that BC Ferries has moved to address the concerns raised in the report.

As a follow-up to the report, Mr. Hahn said he will be meeting with Transport Canada to further review the findings of the TSB report and ensure BC Ferries continues to maintain the highest standards of safety excellence in the industry. He said the safety of BC Ferries' customers and crew is the company's number one priority and that it will not be compromised under any circumstances.

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