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Denman Island cable ferry to be built, operational within two years

BC Ferries announced on November 23 that it will proceed with construction and operation of a cable ferry between Buckley Bay on Vancouver Island and Denman Island. The new 50-car vessel is expected to be in service by the fall of 2014. It will be the longest cable ferry crossing in the world, 300 metres longer than a 1.6-km crossing in Finland.

A public information session about the project will be held Thursday, November 29, from 7-9pm at the Denman Island Seniors Hall.

BC Ferries says it is satisfied, after four years of feasibility studies, that this type of operation meets its criteria for the delivery of a 'safe and reliable operation' for the Buckley Bay-Denman Island service.

The scheme is expected to save \$19 million 'over the life of the assets, calculated on a discounted net present value basis', said BC Ferries' President and CEO Mike Corrigan.

BC Ferries issued a request for proposal to determine if a contractor could provide the cable ferry service to an

acceptable level of safety and quality at a lower cost, but has concluded that it can operate the route in a more cost-effective manner than an alternative service provider.

The company expects to conclude a tender process for the construction of the vessel and terminal works by the summer of 2013.

The necessary regulatory approvals for the cable ferry project have been obtained, including approval from DFO under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and Transport Canada approval under the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*.

BC Ferries states the project's advantages include savings in fuel, capital spending, operating and maintenance costs. Islanders have opposed the project, questioning the project's estimated savings and suitability for the local community and environment. In the BC Legislature, Ferries Critic Gary Coons has called the project an 'experiment.'