

Establish a brand for British Columbia

By Darryl Anderson, Times Colonist January 11, 2011

Re: "Getting smart on cruise ships," Dec. 29.

The editorial raised some important questions. The cruise industry has indeed responded to changes in the marketplace brought about by global competition and the recession. The editorial highlights the importance that consumer demand and customer satisfaction play in vessel deployment decisions.

Unfortunately, the "sensible proposal" to create a cruise ship authority would be of little benefit to coastal communities. Rather, it would simply increase consumer costs and hamper innovation.

One needs to look no further than the regulated maritime passenger transport service that already exists in the province -- B.C. Ferries.

Ferry traffic volume has been stagnant or declining on most routes in recent years while prices have risen substantially. A more effective approach would be for B.C. to create and implement a holistic coastal tourism strategy based on solid market research of tourism trends and customer demand.

Such a strategy should include the creation of a brand identity for the province that is relevant for the cruise, ferry passengers, marine eco-tourism and yachting sectors. In this post-Olympic period, we should be encouraging our tourism industry and political leaders to more vigorously debate the issues and then support effective policy choices.

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