



For Immediate Release  
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### **MEDIA RELEASE: Strong 2014 cruise season a sign of economic vitality**

Victoria, British Columbia—The departure of the final cruise ship of the 2014 season—Holland America's MS Zaandam—at 1pm today will cap off another banner year of strong ship visits and passenger numbers at Ogden Point—the busiest cruise ship port-of-call in all of Canada. Looking ahead, the 2015 season is expected to break all records for cruise tourism in the Capital region.

“Victoria’s cruise industry provides an overall economic benefit to our region of close to \$90 million per year,” said Bruce Carter, CEO of The Chamber. “More ships and more passengers is a significant boost to our local economy and great news for our network of businesses who serve this growing industry.”

Between May and October 2014, 206 cruise ship visits were recorded with approximately 465,000 passengers cruising to Victoria. Looking ahead to next season, virtually every major cruise line is increasing their capacity. Projections for the 2015 season underscore Victoria’s popularity as a destination of choice for cruise passengers with 235 ship calls expected carrying approximately 531,000 passengers. These projections exceed the previous record of 224 ship calls and 503,691 passengers in 2012. Additionally, 2015 will see a 5% increase in average time spent in port and a 23% increase in daytime calls, meaning that more passengers will spend more time and more money enjoying Victoria’s shops, restaurants and attractions.

“I see strategic value in the cruise industry as it adds diversity to our destination’s customer base,” says Tourism Victoria President & CEO Paul Nurse. “I am pleased cruise passengers are increasingly choosing walking as the best way to discover Victoria’s world-class experiences as this supports the growing global trend of experiential-based tourism.”

Passengers coming ashore spend an average of \$66 each during their time in Victoria, and this money directly impacts the bottom line of businesses in the downtown core. During the recent recession, cruise volumes were resilient and provided a critical visitor base that helped local businesses ride out the tough economic times.

“We have enjoyed a very robust summer this year, downtown, and cruise ship passengers have been an integral part of this success,” said Ken Kelly, General Manager of the Downtown Victoria Business Association. “The hard work and partnerships of a number of public and private sector bodies have ensured passengers have discovered and enjoyed more of what our downtown has to offer.”

“The Bay Centre is delighted to welcome the world to Victoria and spread the news about how our downtown core has emerged as a leading hub for tourists to enjoy a unique mix of local, regional and

national retail experiences and cultural amenities in a city whose commitment to outstanding natural beauty is second-to-none,” said Bay Centre General Manager Darlene Hollstein.

The strong cruise results come on the heels of Ogden Point receiving top marks, including the highest possible scores in two out of four evaluated categories, from Green Marine—the leading environmental certification program for the North American marine industry.

“Sustainability is a very important guiding principle for us,” said GVHA President & CEO Curtis Grad. “Strong cruise numbers and positive environmental audit results reflect our combined success in meeting and exceeding our vision for Ogden Point as a top cruise destination. Our definition of a healthy working terminal at Ogden Point is one that sustains a vibrant and viable local economy while working to ease impacts on the local community, water and air quality and marine ecosystems.”

Green Marine’s rigorous independent audit evaluated Ogden Point operations in four environmental categories on a scale of 1 to 5. Level 1 shows regulatory compliance and Level 5 illustrates excellence and leadership. Reaching level 3 is demanding: participants must benchmark their environmental impacts and have implemented best practices and management plans. The chart below indicates the scores received at Ogden Point for the past two years.

Environmental Category	Level Reached (out of 5)	
	2012 Operations	2013 Operations
Greenhouse gases	Level 3	Level 3
Spill prevention	Level 2	Level 5
Community impacts	Level 3	Level 5
Environmental leadership	Level 3	Level 3

Ogden Point’s average score of 4 across the evaluated categories in 2013 demonstrates an upward trend and is significantly higher than Green Marine’s global average score of 3.1.

Ogden Point is a deep water port facility with four piers able to handle very large vessels. GVHA has implemented a number of initiatives to address community and environmental priorities, which were specifically commended by the Green Marine audit, including: our Community Advisors Group, Feedback Strategy, Sustainability Evaluation Tool and the James Bay air quality monitoring program.

Looking ahead, GVHA is working on a 10-year strategy to mitigate bus traffic servicing Ogden Point, leveraging knowledge gained from recent pilot projects, in which innovations were trialed for bus and marine cruise shuttle transportation. This comprehensive strategy is being developed collaboratively with the bus operators and the City of Victoria. Consultations with the public will ensure that the needs of the local community are assessed as the plan is developed. The strategy will define the what, how

and why regarding bus traffic at Ogden Point and address elements such as: equipment, routing, advocacy, communications and monitoring.

Green Marine's full [2013 Performance Report](#) is available on their [website](#).

*Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA) is a not-for-profit corporation governed by a local Board of Directors, which is accountable to GVHA's eight Member Agencies including; the Capital Regional District, City of Victoria, Esquimalt Nation, Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Songhees Nation, Tourism Victoria, Township of Esquimalt; and the Victoria/Esquimalt Harbour Society. It owns and operates deep water, marina and upland holdings throughout Victoria's harbour including the large vessel Ogden Point port facility, Victoria's renowned Fisherman's Wharf, and the inner harbour's luxury yacht and marine tourism facility at Ship Point. GVHA's vision is a harbour where people live, learn, work and play; a spectacular gateway into Victoria's past and into its future, monumental in look and feel, linking communities and all people together.*

[gvha.ca](http://gvha.ca)

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