

Kootenay Lake Ferry Service Improvements Project

Project Update - May 2026



Ministry of
Transportation
and Transit

The Kootenay Lake Ferry Service Improvements Project is delivering a safer and more reliable ferry service for users. This includes improvements to the Balfour and Kootenay Bay terminals, which were completed in summer 2022, and construction of a new electric-ready ferry to replace the aging MV Balfour, which is ongoing.

Update

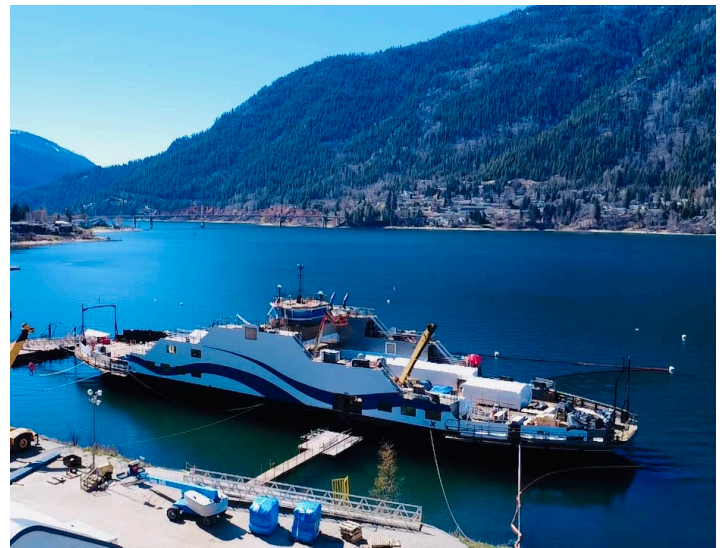
Construction of the new Kootenay Lake Ferry is progressing well and is expected to be completed by December 2026.

Construction of the new ferry is well underway, with painting, piping, electrical, mechanical and outfitting all currently in progress. The final phase of construction, commissioning, involves rigorous equipment testing and system calibration. Commissioning is expected to start in spring 2026, followed by sea trials later in the year. The target for substantial completion is December 2026, with the vessel expected to enter service in 2027.

The Province assumed direct control of the project in November 2025, to address challenges and ensure the ferry is completed quickly and cost efficiently. Since then, construction progress has accelerated under new project management.

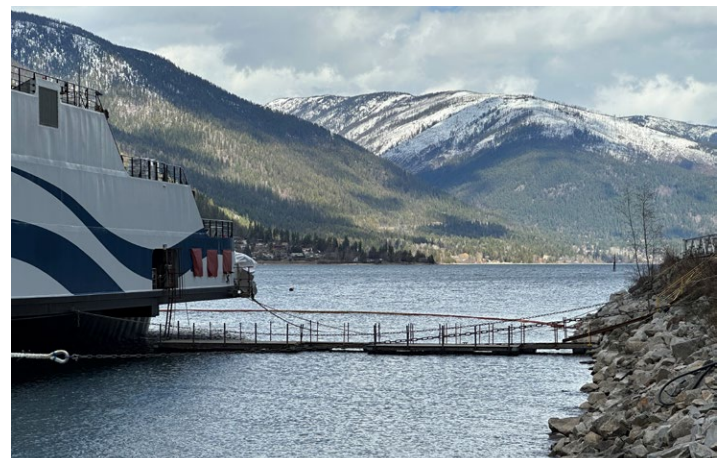
The Kootenay Lake Ferry provides a vital connection for residents, commercial traffic and emergency services, and plays a key role in supporting the regional economy.

Ferry service on Kootenay Lake will continue while construction of the new vessel is ongoing.



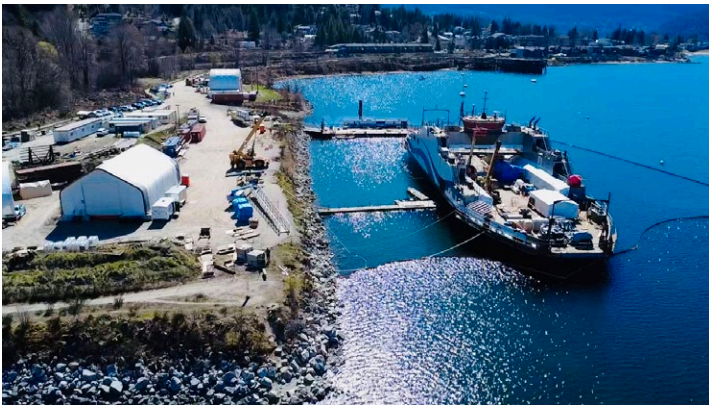
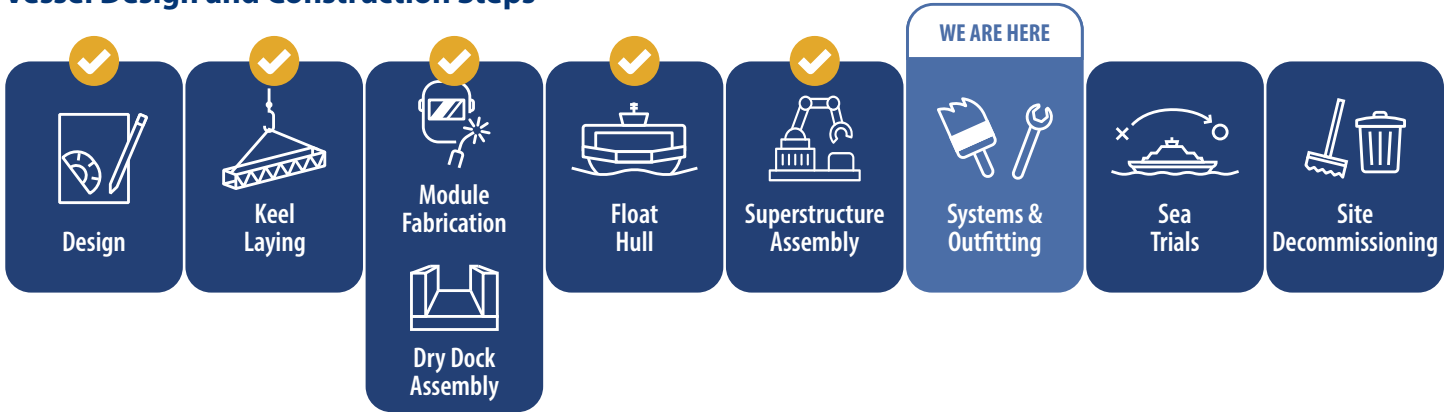
Construction

The vessel is currently about 85% complete, with work focused on completing piping, electrical, insulation, HVAC, machinery systems, and outfitting. The final phase of construction, commissioning, is expected to start in spring 2026 with sea trials later in the year.



The secondary egress system for emergency exit during vessel construction.

Vessel Design and Construction Steps



View of the temporary shipyard from above.



In the below tunnel, 100% of the preoutfit has been completed.

Kootenay Lake Ferry Service

The ferry service continues to operate as usual during the project. Please visit gov.bc.ca/kootenaylakeferry to view the schedule and and consult [DriveBC](#) for up to date information about current conditions at the terminals.



The muster station on the main deck.



Background

In 2018, the Province consulted with ferry users, area residents, and businesses about proposed improvements to the service, safety, and infrastructure of the Kootenay Lake Ferry.

The Province made key changes to the final project plan after considering the input received, along with technical, environmental, and financial considerations. Some of these considerations were documented in the [2018 Consideration Memo](#).

In April 2019, the Province, with funding support from the Government of Canada, announced safety and efficiency improvements to the Kootenay Lake Ferry Service.

The project involves the procurement and delivery of a new electric-ready vessel, and the completed safety and amenity improvements to both the Balfour and Kootenay Bay terminals and minor dredging in the west arm of Kootenay Lake.

Collectively, these improvements will provide ferry users with a safer and more reliable ferry service as well as contribute to the Province's goal of employing electric propulsion on all inland ferries.