

One ferry is free, fares soar on sister ship

BY CLAUDIA HOLDING, TIMES COLONIST FEBRUARY 12, 2011

B.C. has a lot of ferries besides the coastal ones. It has 14 more routes known as inland ferries. Some are small cable ferries, but four are free running.

One that holds many similarities to our Saltspring/Fulford run is the Kootenay Bay ferry. The MV Skeena Queen and the MV Osprey are sister ships and both transport 80 cars and 250 passengers on 35-minute runs. They even make about the same number of crossings daily, except in peak times the Kootenay Lake crossing gets another ferry to handle heavy traffic. Food services are nowhere to be found on the Skeena Queen, but the Osprey does offer this added comfort.

While CEO David Hahn is busy talking up massive rate hikes on our coastal system, it is important to point out that all these inland crossings are under the command of the Ministry of Transportation and are all contracted out to private operators to run -free of charge to users.

This stark difference of free ferry use inland and the goal of user-pay and everincreasing fares for coastal ferries makes absolutely no sense.

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