



REGIONAL REPORTS

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Globe and Mail Update

Published Saturday, Feb. 19, 2011 10:29PM EST

Last updated Monday, Feb. 21, 2011 11:12AM EST

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With the prospect of a 50-per-cent hike in **ferry fees** to Salt Spring Island within five years, islanders were looking more closely at the provincial government's support for the ferry service. Brian Hollingshead, chair of the Southern Gulf Islands Ferries Advisory Committee, questioned whether the province is putting in \$200-million as it claims. "We don't dispute they're spending that money, but it isn't going to BC Ferries to help them reduce fares," Mr. Hollingshead told the [Gulf Islands Driftwood](#). "They include things in their numbers that we don't believe are appropriate for the setting of fares," he said. He cited the inclusion of \$27-million of federal funding and \$24-million in funding for student, senior and patient fares, which he says does not go to BC Ferries. Salt Spring Ferry Advisory Committee chair Harold Swierenga told the newspaper the province's attitude to BC Ferries has shifted from seeing the ferries as a generator of economic activity to viewing the ferries "as a nuisance, a utility that should be nickled and dimed, to keep costs and services down."

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