In a press release announcing that $100 million of duty remission on the German-built Super-C Class ferries will be used to reduce ferry fares, BC Ferries Services' CEO David Hahn is quoted as follows:

“Our customers will significantly benefit from this announcement and it clearly reflects an understanding by Prime Minister Harper and the Government of Canada of the importance of our west coast ferry transportation system to BC’s economy. The announcement also represents a substantial commitment by Premier Campbell and the provincial government to lower fares on the minor, northern and Sunshine Coast routes. This is certainly a win-win for all concerned.”

And, in case we didn’t get the point:

‘Without the support of Federal Ministers’ Stockwell Day and Jim Flaherty this could not have been accomplished. I also wish to thank Premier Campbell and Transportation Minister Shirley Bond for their decision to apply the provincial portion of the savings to lower fares on the minor, northern and Sunshine Coast routes.’

Who’s Making These Decisions?
If we remember right, BC Ferries Services Inc is a corporation specifically set up by the Coastal Ferries Act especially to be independent of political interference. But Mr Hahn has credited no less than five politicians with this ferry fare reduction.

So who’s making BC Ferries’ decisions now? And what’s with the very well paid and recently reappointed Boards of Directors of the BC Ferry Authority and BC Ferries Services Inc? (See also article page 3.)

It’s Borrowed Money
The money to pay this duty was borrowed by the corporation, and if it is not needed, it should be used to reduce BC Ferries Services’ debt, which is ‘maxed out’.

Much as we are inclined to applaud any decrease in ferry fares, it is not sound management to do it with borrowed money.