BC Ferries president David Hahn credits customer response to the reduced 'Coastsaver' fares for increased ferry system revenues in the 2009 summer months.

The ferry system is usually most profitable in its first (April, May, June) and second (July, August, September) fiscal quarters, as spring and summer travelers flock to the islands.

The cheaper summer midweek fares between the mainland and Vancouver Island have become increasingly popular since they were introduced in 2008. In 2009 they contributed to a 4.3% increase in vehicle traffic and a 1.7% increase in passenger traffic over 2008. While the $39 car and driver fare is now well known, many people did not realize that there was also a passenger Coastsaver fare of $9. The discount amounts to about a 30% saving.

Transportation Minister Shirley Bond said that the cheaper fares had 'certainly made a difference'.

The Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs have called upon the government to abandon its policy of freezing ferry subsidies and moving towards 'user pay' to finance the ferry system. The policy had resulted in steadily increasing fares and steadily falling ridership. The response to the Coastsaver fares illustrates that the sensitivity to fares works both ways.