

Friends of the Gulf Islands
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Tara Faganello, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Tara.Faganello@gov.bc.ca

Re: The Future of the Islands Trust

This letter is being written to request a meeting with you to further elucidate issues around the letter you have received from Islands Trust Chair, Peter Luckham requesting a formal review of the Islands Trust mandate, governance and structure. We would like to draw your attention to a fundamental aspect of the founding of the Islands Trust that has been increasingly overlooked with the passage of time.

It was recognized by the government of Dave Barrett in 1974 that the preservation and protection of the islands in the Trust Area was, not only essential, but also that it would require a unique governing structure largely because it was convinced that the people of British Columbia, as well as the residents of the islands, had an intense interest in their preservation and protection.

To ensure that the interests of British Columbians would be considered in all land-use decisions on the islands in the Trust Area, the government created a structure composed of 13 local trust committees each made up of 5 Trustees — 2 elected by island residents and 3 appointed by the province.

However, this structure lasted only as long as the NDP government was in place. A Social Credit government followed and restructured the Islands Trust in such a way that it removed the participation of the provincial government and hence, the interests of British Columbians, from land-use decision-making in the Trust Area and placed it all in the hands of island residents by abolishing the role of appointed trustees. Consequently, the role of the province was tossed aside and a fundamental aspect of the government's vision for the islands in the Trust Area was abandoned and has not been recovered.

We believe that this newer structure has failed to protect the unique environment and communities of the Gulf Islands. Several developments have been approved in areas with inadequate water supplies and other environmental threats. Several islands have so little water that they are dependent on frequent water deliveries.

That the environment is not being protected was also found by the Islands Trust commissioned Governance Report which found "The absence of an overarching vision for the Trust Area as a whole, setting out limits to growth, measures for protection of the

environment, and sustainable strategies for development must be addressed.” That there is substantial support from those who live on the islands and other BC residents and Canadians is shown by the 852 people who signed a petition asking that the Islands Trust give protection of the natural environment first priority.

Therefore, we are asking to meet with you to discuss how the province can, in recognition of its original and intended role, initiate and fully participate in restoring the intended function of the Islands Trust as an area protected for all residents of BC.

Sincerely,

On behalf of Friends of the Gulf Islands:
Jacinthe Eastick (Gabriola)
Maxine Leichter (Salt Spring Island)
Jennifer Margison (Galiano Island)
Carmita de Menyhart (Galiano Island)
Alix Svendsen (Gabriola Island)