



January 25, 2023

Ref: 271802

Friends of the Gulf Islands
Email: Friendsofthegulfis@gmail.com

Dear Friends of the Gulf Islands:

Thank you for your letter of January 10, 2023, requesting a formal review of the Islands Trust mandate, governance and structure.

I understand from your letter that you are concerned that a fundamental aspect of the founding of the Islands Trust has been overlooked over time – namely the preservation and protection of the islands for the people of British Columbia. Specifically, you are concerned that the province no longer appoints trustees to the local trust committees.

As you are aware, the Islands Trust is a special purpose local authority, authorized to plan and regulate land use and protect special places throughout the Islands Trust Area. Similar to local governments, local trust committees (LTC) within the Islands Trust Area and the Islands Trust Council have a high level of local autonomy within their jurisdiction and are responsible for making decisions on behalf of their communities, including considering the governance of the Islands Trust Area.

There were several recommendations provided in the February 2022 [Islands Trust Governance Review](#), many of which could be implemented by the Islands Trust within its existing authorities to address some of the emerging concerns and pressures. This includes the establishment of a Governance Committee to focus on solutions to governance issues identified to be brought forward to the Islands Trust Council and developing a shared understanding among trustees of the mission and mandate.

As you may be aware, the Islands Trust has established a Governance Committee comprised of seven trustees elected by Islands Trust Council and one elected member of the Islands Trust Conservancy Board to determine next steps from the Governance Review. I would anticipate that a component of their work will include the way land use planning and regulation is undertaken by Islands Trust and recognizing the interdependence of the local trust areas and land use planning teams.

The Province's role with regards to matters concerning the Islands Trust is for legislative oversight of the *Islands Trust Act* (Act) and statutory approval of some Islands Trust decisions. In accordance with the Act, the Islands trust must, by bylaw, prepare an annual budget, tax requisition, and revenue anticipation borrowing request – each of which requires approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs rely on Islands Trust staff and the Trustees to determine whether or not a proposed bylaw is appropriate for their community. That said, the Ministry is aware of the challenges that the Islands Trust Council has articulated, and the need for additional discussion about how the Ministry might best support the Islands Trust in reaching their governance objectives.

While no broader provincial review of the Islands Trust is currently underway, Ministry staff will continue to provide support and guidance to the Islands Trust as requested and encourage further progress by the LTCs in realizing the changes identified in the Governance Review.

If you have not done so already, I encourage you to share your thoughts and concerns about the governance and planning process with the Islands Trust staff directly. Please feel free to reach out to the Chief Administrative Officer of the Islands Trust, Russ Hotsenpiller, who may be contacted by telephone at: (250) 405-5160 or email at: rhotsenpiller@islandstrust.bc.ca.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Faganello', written in a cursive style.

Tara Faganello
Assistant Deputy Minister