

Dear Premier John Horgan,

June 12, 2021

It is with dismay that I read the New Policy Draft Statement that the Islands Trust intends to take to First Reading with little or no input or communication with the communities this Statement affects. This draft which is being hammered through with unseemly haste and is a complete abrogation of our democratic process.

This Draft Policy Statement has changed all policy from “should” to “**must**”, totally shackling all the individual communities and their plans, basically making each and every Community Plan redundant along with their locally elected representatives. Below I have listed just a few of the many heavy handed policies:

A. Islands Trust removes the clause that AGRICULTURE is a traditional and valuable activity and installs instead that good agriculture will be determined by the Islands Trust. Gulf Island farmers have been very successful growing food and fruit for the last 100 years. Good farming is not creating a tranquil view for wealthy retired people.

B. Removes the clause that FORESTRY is a traditional use in the gulf islands and installed that NO tree will be removed without a permit from the Islands Trust even though most of the Islands Trust area is very rural with lots of licensed and unlicensed forest lands.

C. Islands Trust will dictate to each and every community and their elected representatives what they think is sustainable means.

D. Islands Trust will dictate to every community and their elected representatives what their visual and scenic values are.

E. There will be NO more wharves built in the entire Islands Trust area other than properties that ONLY have water accesses. By its very nature alone the Islands Trust is a large cluster of very different island communities and travel by personal boat is part of the tradition and quality of island life.

F. Islands Trust will dictate ALL heritage rights other than to First Nations.

These are only **a few** of the heavy handed changes to the new Policy Statement.

It has always been my understanding that Policy Statements for a governing body should suggest to communities and their elected representatives things to consider when they review or change their local by-laws and community plans to best suit the needs of their every changing communities.

Islands Trust Executives and their staff are attempting to totally handcuff and dictate to all the 13 major island communities and 450 smaller islands what they can or can't do in their local communities. The Islands Trust is ignoring its mission statement that each island is a unique community. Each island has unique amenities that they have written into each of their own Community Plans.

The Islands Trust is trying to take complete control of areas such as forestry and agriculture with absolutely no knowledge or professional expertise within their resources. The Islands Trust seem to feel they are more knowledgeable than the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture or Forestry but have no experience in these matters.

A major policy review that dictates to every community and their Official Community Plans should be taken out to each and every community, to as many local meetings as it takes for residents to understand and come to some kind of consensus. For the Islands Trust to expect the residents of all the communities in the Trust area to go onto the Islands Trust website to find the huge number of changes being done with no consultation is unrealistic, undemocratic and very poor thinking; I would go so far as to say that a very limited number of residents even know that this is happening.

If the kind of community and public input that is required for such an important document can't be done during the corona virus pandemic then the Islands Trust should be instructed by the Province to put it on hold until it can hold open town hall meetings. We already have a policy statement that has withstood the test of time and allows each and every community some flexibility to manage their own Land Use By-laws and Community Plans.

I beg the Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Forests to look into this abuse of power and review the Islands Trust and the job the Islands Trust is doing. I cannot emphasize enough the lack of democracy and procedure that the Islands Trust Executive and staff are practising.

I do not say this without much thought and worry as I was an Islands Trust Community Representative for Saturna Island for 21 years and on the Executive of the Islands Trust for 6 years and know wherewith I speak.

Sincerely,
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