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April 24, 2014

File No.: 0410-20; 0420-20

Via Email: mintc@tc.gc.ca

Via Email: FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Lisa Raitt, MP
Minister of Transport
Tower C - 330 Sparks St.
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 0N5

The Honourable Steve Thomson, MLA
Minister of Forests, Lands and
Natural Resource Operations
PO BOX 9049, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Raitt and Minister Thomson:

Re: Cooperating to Develop New Derelict Vessel Legislation and Programs

On behalf of the Islands Trust Council, I once again encourage the federal government and the Province of British Columbia to work together to develop legislation and programs that offer coast-wide solutions to derelict vessel issues. We are seeking measures from senior governments that will not only facilitate removal of vessels once they fall into disrepair or are abandoned, but will also prevent people from abandoning their vessels in the first place.

This year we have invested Islands Trust staff time to assist with development of the forthcoming guide from the Province of British Columbia that will explain the roles of federal and provincial agencies to act on derelict vessels, and actively encouraged coastal stakeholders to help Transport Canada inventory derelict vessels. We supported these initiatives on the hope that this important topic is finally getting attention from your respective departments. We are eager, however, to hear that a comprehensive legislative solution is at hand, after years of urging.

At the September 2013 meeting of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the Islands Trust and Bowen Island Municipality jointly proposed the following resolution which was endorsed by the UBCM membership:

WHEREAS the UBCM previously endorsed resolutions in 2005, 2010, and 2012 proposing constructive solutions and encouraging the federal and provincial governments to take action on the issue of derelict and abandoned vessels;

WHEREAS the issue continues to be of significant concern to coastal communities for economic, aesthetic, environmental and safety reasons; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM again petition the provincial and federal governments to increase their efforts to work together to create a permanent solution to the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels that includes sustainable funding sources.

Over the last few years, local governments in British Columbia have suggested several lasting solutions that could be adopted by senior levels of government, including:

- funding mechanism(s) such as a fee on vessel registrations or a surcharge on marine fuel to fund the removal of derelict and abandoned vessels, barges and docks;
- designated disposal areas where owners can take their unwanted boats and structures to provide an alternative to abandonment on public property; and
- education and vessel product stewardship programs.

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The Islands Trust has specifically suggested that Transport Canada and the Minister of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations study the [Washington State Derelict Vessel Removal Program](#) which reimburses public entities for up to 90% of the cost of removal and disposal of derelict vessels. The program has stable funding from small surcharges on vessel registration fees and permits. Washington State has recently improved their derelict vessel management regime by enacting a new law:

- prohibiting the sale of unseaworthy vessels of a certain age and size;
- establishing new insurance requirements;
- making deconstruction more affordable; and
- adding new revenue sources for the state's Derelict Vessel Removal Account.

With some creativity and cooperative actions, this issue can be solved. We recognize that all levels of government are facing difficult fiscal restraints, but this is an issue where preventative action can prevent future expenditures. For example, the cleanup of the *Davy Crockett*, a derelict vessel located in Washington State, cost American taxpayers \$22 million in 2011. In 2012, the clean-up of the crab fishing vessel *Deep Sea* cost American taxpayers more than \$3.3 million. Both vessels caused oil spills. The *Deep Sea's* oil spill also resulted in significant financial hardship for a shellfish farmer whose operations were shut down for more than a month.

On behalf of the Islands Trust Council, thank you for considering this request. The Islands Trust Council is a federation of local government bodies representing 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and about 10,000 non-resident property owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

We look forward to supporting your future efforts to reduce the safety hazards, environmental contamination risks and visual pollution posed by derelict and abandoned vessels, barges and docks in our communities.

Sincerely,



Sheila Malcolmson
Chair, Islands Trust Council
smalcolmson@islandstrust.bc.ca

cc: Islands Trust Area MPs:

Elizabeth May, Saanich-Gulf Islands
Jean Crowder, Nanaimo-Cowichan
James Lunney, Nanaimo-Alberni
John Duncan, Vancouver Island North
John Weston, West Vancouver/Sunshine Coast

Islands Trust Area MLAs:

Gary Holman, Saanich North and the Islands
Don McRae, Comox Valley
Doug Routley, Nanaimo – North Cowichan
Nicholas Simons, Powell River – Sunshine Coast
Michelle Stilwell, Parksville – Qualicum
Jordan Sturdy, West Vancouver – Sea to Sky

Bowen Island Municipal Council

Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities members

Union of BC Municipalities Executive

Islands Trust Council

Islands Trust website