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April 30, 2008

File Number: TAS-Ag-1

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

Via Email: firb@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Agriculture and Lands
PO Box 9043 STN. PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Richard Bullock, Chair
Farm Industry Review Board
P.O. Box 9129 STN. PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9B5

Dear Minister Bell and Chair Bullock:

Re: Designating organic farming as a normal farm practice in the Islands Trust Area

I am writing on behalf of the Islands Trust Council, a federation of independent local governments representing 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area. In 1974, the Government of British Columbia created the Islands Trust to protect the islands and waters in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound. The significance and sensitivity of the Islands Trust Area and the need for protective measures is internationally recognized. The legislated object of the Islands Trust is *"to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of the province generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the Government of British Columbia."*

A key element of the mandate of the Islands Trust Council is working with other governments and agencies to protect our unique islands. Protecting and enhancing sustainable agricultural activity is a fundamental component of healthy island communities. At the same time, protecting groundwater and aquifers is of critical importance to all life in the Islands Trust Area. While the use of pesticides, is "normal" in the farm industry, many of these chemical substances are proven carcinogens with lengthy half-lives, which reside in our island aquifers and marine waters for long periods.

At its quarterly business meeting in March 2008, the Islands Trust Council unanimously passed the following resolution:

That the Islands Trust Council request the Chair to write to the BC Minister of Agriculture and Lands and the Farm Industry Review Board requesting that they consider organic farming to be a normal farm practice in the Islands Trust Area.

It should be noted that the motion does not imply a restriction on other farm practices, but simply asks that traditional organic farm practices be recognized and considered normal in our region, the Islands Trust Area.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Kim Benson
Chair, Islands Trust Council

pc: Islands Trust Executive Committee
Susan DeGryp, Electoral Area Director, Capital Regional District
Islands Trust Website