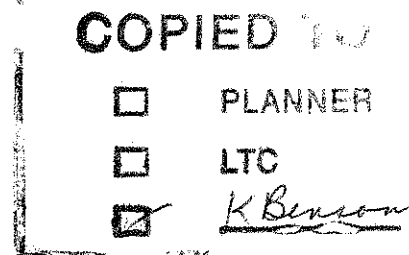


JUN 20 2008

File: 0280-30
Ref: 159239

Kim Benson, Chair
Islands Trust Council
200 - 1627 Fort St
Victoria BC V8R 1H8



Dear Ms. Benson:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 2008 concerning organic farming as a normal farm practice in the Islands Trust area.

I support your efforts in protecting and enhancing sustainable farming. A key program for the Ministry is the Environmental Farm Plan and Ministry staff indicate that you have recognized Environment Farm Planning in some of your Island Community Plans. The Ministry supports and encourages organic farming together with other sustainable farming systems.

The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board sent me a copy of their response to your question of designating a "normal farm practice". I understand that the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) has also indicated that it supports organic farming. However, since the ALC has not had an opportunity to review a proposed bylaw, there would be a risk of inconsistency with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* if a bylaw restricted farm use of agricultural land to this form of agriculture only.

Thank you again for writing and sharing your views.

Sincerely,

Pat Bell
Minister

pc: See page 2

pc: Richard Bullock, Chair
Farm Industry Review Board

Susan deGryp
Electoral Area Director
Capital Regional District