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August 26, 2009

File No. PG/02

The Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Campbell:

Re: LiveSmart BC Efficiency Incentive Program

I am writing on behalf of the Islands Trust Council to encourage the Provincial Government to revitalize and reinstate the LiveSmart BC Efficiency Incentive Program.

We are very concerned about the closure of this program to new participants, as it is an essential component of meeting greenhouse gas reduction targets about to be enshrined in our Official Community Plans. The Bill 27 requirement for all local governments to include greenhouse gas emission targets within their OCPs by May 2010 has resulted in a significant shift of local government resources and priorities throughout the province. It will be difficult to show credible leadership among our local electorate while provincial leadership is being withdrawn.

The Islands Trust consists of 12 local trust areas and one island municipality in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound, and is responsible for setting greenhouse gas targets in 20 separate Official Community Plans (OCP). As a signatory to the Climate Action Charter, we recognize the need for urgent action to meet BC's climate change goals. The cancellation of the energy efficiency incentives leaves many homeowners without the means to help us achieve those targets. Furthermore, the program provided much needed stimulus for the local economies of the Trust Area, as many of the energy efficiency upgrades were undertaken through local small businesses and contractors.

Given the need for urgent action to achieve BC's greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets of 33% by 2020, and the vital importance of stimulating local economies, we believe that the LiveSmart program needs to be just the beginning, rather than the end, of provincial investment in building energy efficiency. Other provinces in Canada that are also being hit hard with the current economic downturn are continuing to offer incentives for energy efficient buildings and upgrades, recognizing the important role this plays in economic stimulus while achieving critical climate change goals. We urge the provincial government to continue to assist local governments and the communities they represent in achieving their Bill 27 greenhouse gas emission targets by:

- Continuing to make energy assessments cost effective through rebates and subsidies for homeowners;
- Dedicating adequate funding to meet the demand for energy efficiency retrofit grants and incentives; and,
- Continuing to provide leadership and assistance to create more energy efficient communities for residents of the Trust Area and all British Columbians.

We appreciate your previous leadership on climate change issues and look forward to your response.

Yours truly,

Sheila Malcolmson
Chair, Islands Trust Council

pc: Honourable Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
Honourable Bill Bennett, Minister of Community and Rural Development
Linda Adams, Chief Administrative Officer, Islands Trust
Islands Trust website

Preserving island communities, culture and environment

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis