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June 19, 2008

File Number: GF/T-5-7
Your File: 127398

The Honourable Ida Chong
Minister of Community Services
PO BOX 9056, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Chong:

Re: Islands Trust Legislative Proposals

Thank you for your letter of May 23, in which you responded to the Islands Trust Council's legislative proposals. We appreciate the support you have given to our goal of improving governance at the Islands Trust and on Salt Spring Island in particular.

At its quarterly meeting last week, the Islands Trust Council considered your suggestion regarding a referendum to assess the level of electoral support for an increase in the size of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee. The Council has unanimously endorsed the concept of a referendum. It has asked me to convey its request that you provide the necessary authority for us to undertake this initiative, concurrent with local elections this November. Should there be electoral support, we understand that further authority would be provided for the additional trustee positions and we would proceed with a by-election early in 2009. We appreciate your offer for assistance with the additional costs that a by-election could entail.

I believe you will also recall that Trust Council originally requested a further legislative change to enable it to determine the number of vice-chairs on its Executive Committee, rather than having this determined by regulation. We understand that this proposal has not advanced. Nevertheless, we continue to have concerns regarding the size of our Executive Committee. Each member of the Executive Committee chairs several Local Trust Committee meetings, at different locations throughout the Islands Trust Area. Since the introduction of open meeting procedures several years ago, we have dramatically increased the number of Local Trust Committee meetings, and this has had important benefits for transparency and accountability on each island. However, it has also significantly increased the workload for each of the vice chairs. We believe a five-member body would better serve the needs of island communities. Further, an odd-numbered body would minimize the current potential for tie votes at the Executive Committee level.

As s. 20(3) of the *Islands Trust Act* currently indicates that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may increase the number of vice chairs on the recommendation of the Islands Trust Council, our Council has passed a resolution recommending that the Lieutenant Governor in Council increase the number of Executive Committee vice chairs from three to four. We would ask for your support in advancing this recommendation.

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Finally, we understand that other parts of our original request may still be considered for further action. We are particularly interested in having the necessary authority for Islands Trust bodies to meet electronically through video or teleconference and we believe this may only require a minor regulatory amendment. As signatories to the BC Climate Action Charter, we are actively developing our strategy to have carbon neutral operations by 2012. Given the dispersed nature of the Islands Trust Area, transportation is a significant source of our operational greenhouse gas emissions. We believe the ability to hold electronic meetings, when appropriate, will be of considerable assistance in achieving our goals for carbon neutrality.

We appreciate the advice and assistance that your staff have provided as we have worked towards the improvements in governance at the Islands Trust, which have been very important to our trustees and their constituents. We appreciate your ministry's commitment to on-going assistance from your staff as we move forward. We would be pleased to provide any additional information if needed in regards to these matters. For these purposes, our staff contact continues to be our CAO, Linda Adams.

Sincerely,



Kim Benson
Chair
Islands Trust Council

pc: Honourable Murray Coell, MLA Saanich North and the Islands
Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee
G. Paget, A/ADM – Local Government, MCS
M. Dann, Senior Policy Analyst, MCS
L Adams, Chief Administrative Officer
Islands Trust website