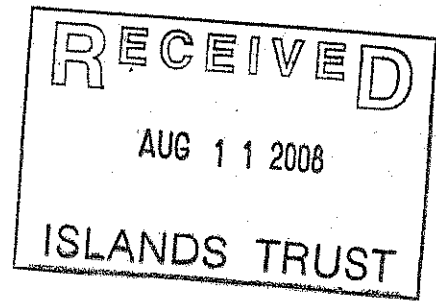




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Reference: 99563

August 7, 2008

Kim Benson, Chair
Islands Trust Council
200 – 1627 Fort Street
Victoria, BC V8R 1H8

Dear Ms. Benson:

Thank you for your letter of June 24, 2008, addressed to the Honourable Barry Penner, Minister of Environment, regarding the support of the Islands Trust Council for *Living Water Smart*, British Columbia's Water Plan, and the identification of the Gulf Islands as a priority area for regulating ground water use. The Minister has asked that I respond on his behalf.

Living Water Smart includes a commitment to regulate ground water use in priority areas and large ground water withdrawals by the year 2012. Ministry staff have been working with the Ground Water Advisory Board to develop ground water regulations for BC in three phases. Phase 1 has been enacted and Phase 2 is currently being drafted. Phase 3 is expected to address, among other things, implementation of water management plans in designated areas. As you may know, the *Water Act* does allow for licensing, drilling authorizations and planning in specific areas as future possibilities and further allows for a regulation to designate a specific area or aquifer where licensing might be applied.

I would like to applaud Islands Trust for the approaches it has taken over the years, as well as its more recent initiatives to promote sustainability and protection of ground water in the Gulf Islands. Given this experience, the Ministry welcomes the opportunity to work with the Islands Trust Council. We would like to further explore your offer to provide information and advice as the Phase 3 recommendations respecting water management plans in designated areas are developed. Lynn Kriwoken, Director, Innovation & Planning, Water Stewardship Division will arrange a meeting with Lisa Dunn in September to discuss ground water regulations in the Gulf Islands.

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I appreciate your interest in this important issue and look forward to working with the Islands Trust to protect the ground water resources of the Gulf Islands.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Mattison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James S. Mattison
Assistant Deputy Minister

cc: Lynn Kriwoken, Director, Innovation & Planning, Water Stewardship Division