

ROOTS

Renewal of the Origins of the Trust Study Group

May 16, 2006

Ms. Kim Benson
Chair
Islands Trust Governance Task Force

Dear Ms. Benson:

The ROOTS group (Renewal of the Origins of the Trust Study group) on Salt Spring Island submits this letter for consideration by the Islands Trust Governance Review Task Force. This letter further describes our thoughts and concerns expressed in a previous letter (April 30) to the Task Force.

ROOTS is an informal group of residents on Salt Spring Island that supports the Islands Trust preserve and protect mandate and unique form of government. ROOTS' activities have included preparing a discussion paper that examines the tools available to (and needed by) the Trust to uphold its mandate; hosting an inter-islands forum in September 2005 with over a hundred participants from throughout the southern Gulf Islands; and continuing to evaluate and support Trust functions in order to improve and strengthen our local government.

As the Task Force considers a suite of proposed reforms to governance of the southern Gulf Islands, we would ask you to consider our views on seven different, but related, matters: increased resources from the province, increased resources for Trustees, increased salaries for Trustees, increased number of Trustees, altered representation at Trust Council, a local commission concept, and overall financial re-arrangements throughout the Trust islands.

1. **Increased resources from the province:** We find it objectionable, as we know that Trust Council also does, that the province has been steadily decreasing its financial support for the Islands Trust. The Trust was enacted not simply for the protection of the Trust area and the enjoyment of its residents, but also for British Columbians in general. As the Trust's recent poll of British Columbians makes vividly clear, people throughout the province greatly treasure the Trust area and want to see it preserved for its own sake and for the enjoyment of all citizens of the province. We urge the Trust to advocate for increased support from the province, and we will stand behind you as active citizens supporting that effort. We also will work with other islanders to do this.
2. **More Trustees:** Given the large and growing population and tax base of Salt Spring, and the issues and activities that must be addressed, we ask that the Trust

work for changes in the enabling legislation that would allow Salt Spring to have two more Trustees to shoulder the workload. Perhaps a formula for all of the islands, based on population, would be the fairest approach. We also believe that this would provide an opportunity for a greater diversity of representation, given the island's population. We continue to support representation on the Local Trust Committee by an off-island chair and consider it an important aspect of the islands' confederation, in which we strongly believe.

3. **Greater resources for Salt Spring's Trustees:** We are painfully aware of the need for our Trustees to have direct staff resources. Our Trustees are working fulltime, serving a population of about 10,000 people, and have no direct staff support. We ask that the Trust budget for a full-time administrative staff person to support our Trustees. Furthermore, we ask that the Trust provide office space for our Trustees. They are working fulltime for our island community, yet are working in a makeshift space in a multi-use conference room. They need, and deserve, separate office space. Thirdly, we ask that the discretionary funding available to the Trustees be increased to allow for greater effectiveness and efficiency as they address local situations. We ask the Trust to acknowledge the size of the population they serve and the resulting workload they carry, and to budget accordingly. In summary, we ask that the Trust provide a greater discretionary budget for our Trustees, that would allow for an office space, direct administrative support and other special areas of concern (e.g. committee support, special projects funding, etc.) that require budget support.
4. **Increased salaries for Trustees:** We ask that the Trust revise the salary structure for Trustees, with the result of doubling current salaries for Salt Spring Trustees. A \$12,300 salary for essentially a full-time local government position is simply not enough considering population size, the workload and the responsibilities of the Trustees. We also believe that this measure will attract a wider variety of Trust candidates with strong qualifications.
5. **More votes at Trust Council:** In conjunction with giving more Trustees to islands with larger populations, like Salt Spring, we also advocate that such islands thus have greater representation and influence at Trust Council. This can be accomplished by allowing each trustee to have one vote at Trust Council.
6. **Local commission:** Even though our current Trustees are working very closely with our CRD director, we would like that relationship to be more formalized to allow for better integration of CRD and Trust functions on the island. We request that the Governance Review Task Force investigate the feasibility of a CRD delegated local community commission as a method of strengthening local governance, particularly on Salt Spring Island.
7. **Financial re-arrangements:** In summary, many of our recommendations would require the Trust to re-arrange allocations to each island, based on needs by population size. Such a formula would better meet the needs of our island, and better reflect the portion of tax revenues that Salt Spring contributes to the Trust. Although we support the dedication of some Salt Spring resources to support the

islands' federation, Salt Spring Trustees require more Trust resources and more discretion over the allocation of those resources in order to do a good job.

We reiterate our strong support for the Islands Trust mandate and form of government. Our recommendations for reform are offered in the spirit of strengthening our form of government and making it more effective. Like the 70% of Salt Spring voters who voted against a bid for incorporation in 2002, we do not favor incorporation on the island and would instead like to see our Trust governance strengthened. We have been working actively with other islanders in this regard for the past year and a half and will continue our efforts. We will stand behind Trust Council in advocating for these reforms.

Sincerely,

Christine Torgrimson
Nora Layard
Greg Spendjian
Maxine Leichter
Jean Gelwicks
Marion Pape
Sharon McCollough

cc: Trustees Peter Lamb, George Ehring
CRD Director, Gary Holman
Linda Adams