



News Release

200 - 1627 Fort Street Victoria BC V8R 1H8

Telephone **250.405.5151** FAX: 250.405.5155

Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 604.660.2421. Elsewhere in BC **1.800.663.7867**
information@islandstrust.bc.ca www.islandstrust.bc.ca

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Islands Trust Welcomes Comments on Proposed 2015-2016 Budget

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust Council is seeking public feedback on its proposed budget for 2015-2016. Trust Council's Financial Planning Committee is recommending a budget of \$7.18 million. There is no increase in the tax requisition associated with the proposed budget, except for the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area and Bowen Island Municipality, as explained below.

"The Province of British Columbia has given the Islands Trust Council the responsibility to preserve and protect our island environment and resources, while maintaining the vitality of our communities. We are always looking for ways to deliver services to our island communities in a fiscally responsible manner," said Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. "The Islands Trust Council reviewed the draft budget in December. We are now seeking feedback from islanders before Trust Council's final consideration in March. We want to know if the proposed programs, projects and services we have budgeted for, reflect the current values and needs of our island communities."

The Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee has requested a Special Property Tax Requisition of \$119,500 to continue coordination of watershed management on the island. It would be collected only within the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area, and represents a nominal increase in the tax requisition from last fiscal year. More information about the Salt Spring Island tax requisition is available on the Islands Trust [website](#).

Bowen Island taxpayers contribute a proportionate share of the cost of operations of the Trust Council and the Trust Fund Board as defined by the provincial *Islands Trust Act*. If the proposed budget is approved, property owners within the Bowen Island Municipality would contribute \$229,596 towards the cost of Trust Council and Trust Fund Board operations. This would represent an increase of \$14,943 in the overall contribution from Bowen Island, compared to 2014-2015. The actual taxes paid by individual property owners could go up or down with changes in their relative assessed property value. The projected increase in the total contribution from Bowen Island relates to higher assessed values of Bowen Island properties as a percentage of the total assessed value of all properties in the Islands Trust area.

While the Trust Council is proposing the same tax requisition as last year, there would be an increase of \$130,176 in expenses over 2014-2015. That increase will enable the Islands Trust to maintain its core functions and complete work on compliance with provincial requirements under the *Riparian Areas Regulation*. This provincial regulation requires local governments to ensure that fish habitat within their jurisdiction is protected to specific standards defined by Section 12 of the *Fish Protection Act*.

"The proposed budget represents many hours of discussion, debate and difficult decisions by both the local trust committees and the Islands Trust staff," said Luckham. "As Trust Council settles into its new term, I want to acknowledge the trustees from previous terms whose budget decisions have left us in excellent financial shape, allowing us to maintain services without proposing a tax increase for the coming fiscal year."

The budget proposal is available online at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/trust-council/budget or in print from the following Islands Trust offices:

1-500 Lower Ganges Road
Salt Spring Island, BC
Phone: 250.537.9144

700 North Road
Gabriola Island, BC
250.247.2063

200-1627 Fort Street
Victoria, BC
250.405.5151

- more -

Preserving *Island* communities, culture and environment

Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

Islands Trust Welcomes Comments ...2

In order to meet Trust Council meeting deadlines feedback received by **noon Wednesday, February 11, 2015** will be included as part of the Financial Planning Committee's budget recommendation to Trust Council, included in the Trust Council meeting package and posted to the website.

Feedback received by **noon, Thursday, February 19, 2015** will still be included in the public Trust Council meeting agenda package and posted to the website.

Feedback received by **noon Friday, February 27, 2015** will be included for Trust Council's consideration at its March 10-12 meeting.

Comments can be sent to: Islands Trust Council, Attention: Treasurer at #200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8R 1H8; by fax: 250.405.5155 or by e-mail: budget@islandstrust.bc.ca.

The Islands Trust is a federation of special-purpose local government bodies representing 25,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 10,000 non-resident property-owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

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CONTACT

Peter Luckham
Chair, Islands Trust Council
250.210.2553

Cindy Shelest
Director, Administrative Services
250.405.5150
250.896.1882 cell