



News Release

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SALT SPRING REFERENDUM TO DETERMINE LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE SIZE

VICTORIA — The Islands Trust Council has voted unanimously to hold a referendum on November 15, 2008, so that Salt Spring Islanders can indicate whether they would like two additional trustees on their Local Trust Committee. The decision was in response to a suggestion made by Community Services Minister Ida Chong in a recent letter to the Islands Trust Council. If voters agree, the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee would increase in size from a 3-member body to a 5-member body, with the two additional trustees elected in a by-election early in 2009. The two additional trustees would be full voting members of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee.

In 2007, the Islands Trust Council requested the minister to amend the *Islands Trust Act* to increase the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee and the number of Salt Spring Island seats at Trust Council, each by two. Currently, the Islands Trust Council has 26 members, with two elected trustees from each of 13 island areas designated within the *Islands Trust Act*. The minister has suggested that electors in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area should decide, by referendum, about the size of its Local Trust Committee.

“While we didn’t get quite everything we asked for from the minister, we certainly agree with letting Salt Spring Islanders make the decision about this,” said Kim Benson, Islands Trust Council Chair. “Trust Council believes that additional local trustees would serve the community well and would reduce some of the workload that they currently experience. Additional representatives would also provide greater diversity in viewpoints and increase the influence of Salt Spring Islanders on all local land use decisions. It would also make it more likely that a Salt Spring trustee would be willing to sit on the Executive Committee. All in all, Council’s assessment is that this would be a positive change. We will be interested to see what voters think about the proposal in the fall.”

While Minister Chong has indicated that only two of the four trustees from Salt Spring would be able to vote at Trust Council meetings, the Islands Trust Council will also consider amending its internal policies to maximize the new members’ participation in Trust Council business.

“There was strong support at Trust Council for ensuring that any additional Salt Spring trustees would be able to influence and participate in Trust Council business too,” said Chair Benson. “For example, we will be looking at our policies about membership in Council’s Financial Planning, Local Planning, and Trust Programs Committees to determine how the additional members could be involved in making recommendations to Council.” The Trust Council makes decisions about broader Islands Trust matters, including budget, policy and area-wide advocacy.

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