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September 22, 2011

File No. FG/04; TAS/DV-1

Honourable Denis Lebel
Minister of Transport, Infrastructure, and Communities
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Lebel:

I am writing in support of Bill C-231, an Act to Amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (derelict vessels and wrecks), that was tabled by Jean Crowder, Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Cowichan, on June 16, 2011.

The Islands Trust is a federation of local government bodies responsible for land use planning and regulation of 470 islands along the southern British Columbia coast. We have a provincial mandate to preserve and protect the unique amenities and environment of this special area for residents and all British Columbians.

The Islands Trust has been active for several years in seeking a sustainable solution from senior governments to address the increasing numbers of derelict vessels littering our coastlines. Our community members raise concerns regularly about the impacts that derelict vessels have on the environment, navigation and the aesthetics of our islands -- an international tourism destination. Concerned citizens also regularly cite the lack of agency coordination that makes it impossible to know to what ministry they should turn.

We believe Bill C-231 is an important bill that could protect coastal communities from serious impacts created by derelict and abandoned vessels. We understand Bill C-231 seeks to amend the existing legislation to address existing deficiencies and to establish measures for adequate removal, disposition, or destruction of derelict vessels.

I believe that this bill will be beneficial to communities from coast to coast as well as for those with inland waterways. I urge you to support this bill through to Royal Assent, or to identify other steps your government will take to address this crucial issue for coastal communities.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sheila Malcolmson
Chair, Islands Trust Council

cc: Jean Crowder, MP Nanaimo-Cowichan
Elizabeth May, MP Saanich-Gulf Islands
Islands Trust website

Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis