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July 11, 2018

File Number: 0400-30; 4700-20

via e-mail: premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable John Horgan
Premier of BC
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Horgan:

Re: Designate Islands Trust Area for Rural Dividend Program Funding

On behalf of the Islands Trust Council I am writing to request that the Province designate all islands in the Islands Trust Area as permanently eligible for Rural Dividend Program funding and other granting programs for rural communities, including the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

It has been a long-standing concern that the Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas and Bowen Island have been ineligible for economic development and infrastructure programs intended for rural communities due to their inclusion within the Capital Regional District (CRD) and Metro Vancouver Regional District. The decision to exclude these rural areas from rural programs and funding does not reflect the islands' rural character, geography, land use or capacity to sustain services. Without access to these funding sources, rural island communities find it difficult to sustain community resiliency in the face of social and economic changes and to execute projects that improve community infrastructure.

In 2016, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed a resolution asking the Province to officially recognize and classify the three CRD electoral areas as rural communities. The three CRD electoral areas are now eligible for the Rural Dividend Program and I understand Bowen Island has been granted temporary eligibility. However, they remain ineligible for grants from the Island Coastal Economic Trust. We are requesting that the Province of BC make all islands in the Islands Trust Area permanently eligible for the Rural Dividend Program and the Island Coastal Economic Trust, and any other existing or future granting programs intended for rural communities.

The object of the Islands Trust as set out in the *Islands Trust Act* is to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.

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We appreciate your consideration of this request. There are many First Nations who have asserted Aboriginal interests in the Trust Area and many who have established harvesting rights. Although we copy First Nations on all correspondence such as this, we have not directly heard their positions on rural funding programs. Given our commitment to establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship with First Nations, we offer the Islands Trust position while being ready to respectfully consider their positions.

Yours sincerely,



Susan Morrison
Acting Chair, Islands Trust Council
smorrison@islandstrust.bc.ca

cc: The Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of
Municipal Affairs and Housing
Islands Trust Area MLAs
Island Coastal Economic Trust Board of Directors
Union of British Columbia Municipalities Executive
Capital Regional District Board
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Cowichan Tribes
Esquimalt First Nation
Halalt First Nation
Homalco First Nation
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group
K'omoks First Nation
Klahoose First Nation
Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lyackson First Nation
Malahat Nation
Musqueam First Nation
Nanwakolas Council
Pauquachin First Nation
Penelakut Tribe
Qualicum First Nation
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
Semiahmoo First Nation
Shíshálh (Sechelt) First Nation
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
Snuneymuxw (Nanaimo) First Nation
Songhees First Nation
Squamish First Nation
Stz'uminus (Chemainus) First Nation
Te'mexw Treaty Association
Tla'amin (Sliammon) First Nation
T'Sou-ke (Sooke) First Nation
Tsartlip First Nation
Tsawout First Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tseil-Waututh (Burrard Inlet) First Nation
Tseycum First Nation
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge First Nation)
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River First Nation)
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website