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File Number: 0400-30; 4700-20

via e-mail: ised.minister-ministre.isde@canada.ca

The Honourable Navdeep Bains
Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

Dear Minister Bains:

Re: Designate Islands Trust Area eligible for Western Economic Diversification Program Funding

The Islands Trust Council at its recent quarterly meeting on Saturna Island passed the following motion:

“That Trust Council request the Chair to write to the federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, responsible for Western Economic Diversification of Canada, to request that the Minister designate all islands in the Islands Trust Area as eligible for Community Futures funding and other granting programs for rural communities.”

Therefore, I am requesting on behalf of the Islands Trust Council that the Minister take the steps necessary to make all islands in the Islands Trust Area eligible for Community Futures funding and other granting programs for rural communities.

It has been a long-standing concern that Salt Spring Island, those islands within the Capital Regional District’s Southern Gulf Islands electoral area, and Bowen Island within Metro Vancouver Regional District have been ineligible for economic development and infrastructure programs intended for rural communities due to their inclusion within the Capital Regional District and Metro Vancouver Regional District. We understand that the decision to exclude these areas from Community Futures funding was made at least 30 years ago. The decision to exclude these rural areas from rural funding programs does not reflect the true rural character, geography, land use or capacity to sustain services of these islands. 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.

The object of the Islands Trust as set out in the provincial *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.

.../2

The Honourable Navdeep Bains
July 13, 2018
Page 2

The Islands Trust is a federation of special-purpose local government bodies representing 26,000 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 5,200 square kilometres. Please see Attachment 1. to this letter.

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,



Peter Luckham
Chair, Islands Trust Council

Attachment 1. Map of Islands Trust Area

cc: Islands Trust Area MPs
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)
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website

Map of Islands Trust Area:

