



News Release

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Islands Trust Calls on Ottawa to Reduce and Ultimately Eliminate Freighter Anchorages

VICTORIA – At its September meeting, the Islands Trust Council called on the federal government to work towards eliminating the use of 33 commercial freighter anchorages throughout the Southern Gulf Islands, an area Transport Canada refers to as the South Coast of British Columbia.

Over the past 10 years, the number of coal, grain and break bulk cargo ships anchoring in the Gulf Islands region while waiting to access the Port of Vancouver has increased dramatically. Residents have had enough of the increased number of vessels, the increasing size of these vessels and the longer periods of time that ships spend at anchor. Ships end up sitting at anchor due to a lack of sufficient port infrastructure and long-standing supply chain problems. While at anchor these ships generate significant amounts of unnecessary noise, light, and air pollution. There are many local concerns about the potential risks these vessels pose to the marine environment, marine species, and oil spills.

Industry and government predict anchorage use will continue to increase unless the federal government and the Port of Vancouver implement solutions. For ten years, the Islands Trust has worked collaboratively with industry and the federal government on resolving anchorage issues. The Islands Trust has asked for a twenty-year mitigation plan that would reduce the need for vessels to go to anchor.

“It’s time to send a clear message: Canada’s long-term vision for shipping should not include commercial freighter anchorages in the Southern Gulf Islands,” explained Islands Trust Council Chair, Peter Luckham. “Enormous freighters are regularly anchored near rural island communities and in sensitive marine habitats because industry, railways and government have failed to adequately plan and invest in infrastructure for the predicted growth of exports. With the federal government reviewing Canadian port authorities and potentially amending the *Canada Marine Act* and the *Canada Shipping Act*, we are asking for federal leadership on the anchorages file that will prioritize marine protection and the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale population, and ensure quality of life for coastal residents.”

In its [statement](#) calling upon the federal government to take all measures possible to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of these anchorages, the Islands Trust Council raised issues related to lack of consultation; lack of attention to First Nations rights and title; the noise, light, and air pollution from anchored vessel; impacts to the marine environment and the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale population; local economic impacts; and oil spill risks.

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The Islands Trust Council is a federation of local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and about 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.