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Via email: darren.molder@vch.ca

Darren Molder
Senior Environmental Health Officer & Drinking Water Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health – Coastal Rural

Dear Mr. Molder and staff at the Environmental Health Office,

Re: Marine water testing in the Sunshine Coast Regional District islands

I am writing to you on behalf of the Gambier Island Local Trust Committee to request that islands in the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) be included in on-going marine water quality testing.

In early July, just after the heat dome event on BC's southern coast, it came to our attention that a couple of children became ill after swimming at a beach on Gambier Island. At the same time, the local newspaper reported that Vancouver Coastal Health had closed several local beaches after tests indicated high E.coli counts. The local community was surprised to see that there was no information about testing on the SCRD islands.

Residents in the New Brighton/Gambier Harbour area paid privately for water samples to be done and the readings were far above safe levels for the New Brighton area. Although Vancouver Coastal Health subsequently responded with second tests to confirm that the levels had returned to "normal", there was no consideration of further or regular testing of that area. After a brief query to other islands in the area, it was noted that swimming areas on Bowen Island are tested.

Please consider adding vulnerable island swimming areas (including New Brighton and possibly Plumper Cove on Keats Island) to the Vancouver Coastal Health marine water-testing regime especially when there are concerns about rising E.coli counts.

We look forward to your response.

Thank you

Sue-Ellen Fast
Chair, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee

cc: Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)
Sunshine Coast Regional District Board
Gambier Island Local Trust Committee
Executive Committee
Islands Trust website

Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea

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