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September 25, 2026

File No.: 11-5420-30

Via email: premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable David Eby
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Eby:

Re: Drought Readiness

I am writing on behalf of Islands Trust Council to encourage the Province of British Columbia to implement the recommended actions in the POLIS Water Sustainability Project's [Drought Ready: From Crisis Response to Community and Watershed Resilience in British Columbia](#) report.

Released on July 15, 2026, by the POLIS Water Sustainability Project at the University of Victoria's Centre for Global Studies, the report identifies legal, policy, and planning tools available to the Province to shift from reactive draught response toward long-term community and watershed resilience. It sets out five interconnected recommendations:

1. Set the policy and knowledge foundation for the change ahead;
2. Shift water mindsets and relationships;
3. Promote water conservation and efficiency;
4. Expedite water and watershed sustainability planning; and
5. Resource and empower local drought governance and response.

These recommendations are particularly relevant to the Islands Trust Area. Most island residents rely on private wells drawing from fractured bedrock aquifers that depend on seasonal rainfall for recharge. Increasingly, island communities are reporting wells going dry, while coastal aquifers face growing risk of saltwater intrusion. Islanders are also increasingly reliant on bulk water deliveries from on and off island providers. Drought has broader ecological consequences as well, increased stress on western redcedar and other vegetation and the drying or reduction of seasonal wetlands that provide important habitat.

Islands Trust has a provincial mandate to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement

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

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districts, First Nations, other persons and organizations, and the government of British Columbia. In support of that mandate, Islands Trust has undertaken significant freshwater-related work, including mapping critical aquifer recharge areas and vulnerable groundwater regions, developing the Freshwater Atlas to inform land-use decisions, assessing water availability on individual islands, and requiring professional certification of potable water supply at subdivision.

This work builds on the Islands Trust Council's Freshwater Sustainability Strategy, developed with support from the Province's Healthy Watersheds Initiative. It also provides a strong foundation for the kind of local-scale water and watershed sustainability planning identified in the *Draught Ready* report.

Islands Trust encourages the Province to implement the POLIS recommendations in a manner that recognises and builds on the freshwater planning and local knowledge already under development in the Trust Area. We also encourage the Province to strengthen the capacity of local governments, Islands Trust and First Nations to participate meaningfully in drought readiness, water conservation and watershed sustainability planning.

The experience of island communities demonstrates that drought readiness cannot be addressed solely as an emergency response. Long-term planning, local capacity, water conservation and protection of groundwater and watershed systems are essential to building resilient communities and ecosystems.

Thank you for considering this request.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Patrick', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Laura Patrick
Chair, Islands Trust Council

cc: Honourable Christine Boyle, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs
Honourable Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
POLIS Water Sustainability Project
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Islands Trust Council

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