



200-1627 Fort Street, Victoria BC V8R 1H8
Telephone **(250) 405-5151** Fax (250) 405-5155

Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 604.660.2421. Elsewhere in BC
1.800.663.7867

Email information@islandstrust.bc.ca

Web www.islandstrust.bc.ca

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File No.: 0400-30 Ministries

Via email: FLNR.minister@gov.bc.ca; LWRS.Minister@gov.bc.ca; katrine.conroy.MLA@leg.bc.ca;
josie.osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca

The Honourable Katrine Conroy

Minister of Forests
PO Box 9049 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

The Honourable Josie Osborne

Minister of Land, Water, and Resource Stewardship
PO Box 9012 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8M 9L6

Dear Ministers Conroy and Osborne:

Re: Request for New Legislation to Protect and Restore Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Health

On behalf of Islands Trust Council, I am writing to you to convey Trust Council's request that the Province of British Columbia, in partnership with Indigenous leadership, develop and communicate in a timely way the process and timelines through which you plan to develop new legislation to protect and restore biological diversity and ecosystem health, in a manner consistent with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and with the involvement of Islands Trust, local governments, civil society groups, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, scientists, and members of the public.

As you are well aware, the recent [Old Growth Strategic Review](#) report commissioned by the Province identified several actions needed to foster a paradigm shift in the way forests are managed in British Columbia. One of the report's key recommendations was to declare conservation of ecosystem health and biodiversity in British Columbia as an overarching priority and enact legislation that legally established this priority for all sectors. I was pleased to see that your ministerial mandate letters call on you to co-lead the implementation of the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review, in collaboration with Indigenous leaders, labour, industry, and environmental groups.

In September 2021, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs-in-Assembly (UBCIC) called on the Province to explicitly and publicly commit to the enactment of new, overarching legislation for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem health, to be developed in cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, aligning with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and upholding Title and Rights to strengthen biodiversity conservation and management.

In the face of a climate emergency, the ecosystems that Indigenous Peoples and B.C. communities depend on for their spiritual, cultural, economic, and health needs are increasingly under threat. It is urgently important for the Province to enact legislation to better protect ecosystem health and biodiversity without further delay. Doing so in collaboration with First Nations and Indigenous people will be critical to the Province's reconciliation commitments and to the creation of inclusive and effective legislation.

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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

It will also be critical for the Province to involve special-purpose agencies such as Islands Trust, local governments, civil society groups, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, scientists, and members of the public in the development of this legislation, to ensure that their unique vulnerabilities, perspectives, and interests are considered.

Thank you for considering this important request. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Luckham
Chair, Islands Trust Council
pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca

cc:

- Premier of British Columbia
- Minister of Municipal Affairs
- Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
- Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs-in-Assembly (UBCIC)
- BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation
- Cowichan Tribes
- K'ómoks First Nation
- Klahoose First Nation
- Lyackson First Nation
- MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) First Nation
- Qualicum First Nation
- scəwáəən (Tsawwassen) First Nation
- Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
- səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nation
- SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation
- shíshálh (Sechelt) First Nation
- Skw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation
- Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Songhees First Nation
- Spune'luxutth (Penelakut) Tribe
- SXÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation

- Stz'uminus First Nation
- łəʔəmen (Tla'amin) First Nation
- T'Sou-ke First Nation
- Ts'uubaa-asatx (Lake Cowichan) First Nation
- Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) First Nation
- We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation
- W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation
- W̱SIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation
- Xeláłtxw (Halalt) First Nation
- Xwémalhkwx (Homalco) First Nation
- Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) First Nation
- xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation
- First Nations Leadership Council
- Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group
- Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society
- Nanwakolas Council
- Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council
- Te'mexw Treaty Association
- W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council
- Islands Trust Area MLAs
- Bowen Island Municipal Council
- Islands Trust Council
- Islands Trust Website