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November 20, 2023

File No: TH-RZ-2022.1; TH-6410-03

Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests
FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Ralston,

Please be advised that on November 7, 2023, the Thetis Island Local Trust Committee advised staff to proceed no further with Oreste Panacui for Abrupt Shellfish, Inc. (Crown Land file 1414783) application to rezone 14 hectares of Marine area in Preedy Harbour, adjacent to Crescent Point, Thetis Island.

The following motion was moved and carried unanimously:

That the Thetis Island Local Trust Committee proceed no further with application TH-RZ-2022.1 for the following reasons:

- a. Inconsistent with the Thetis Island Official Community Plan No. 88;
- b. Inconsistent with the Islands Trust Policy Statement;
- c. Incompatible with adjacent land and recreational uses; and
- d. Potential risk to sensitive ecosystems.

The Thetis Island Local Trust Committee asks the Minister to respect the Local Trust Committee's rejection of this application and to deny issuance of the tenure for Crown Land File 1414783.

The Applicant had made a very similar application in April 2020 which was denied for reasons much the same as the recent LTC decision. The reasons to proceed no further for the first application are listed below:

- The large scale nature of the proposed commercial infrastructure of underwater staking netting and anchors.
- The potential of the infrastructure materials becoming marine debris due to storms or marine fouling, and the potential negative impacts it may have on environmental/ecological features, flora and fauna;
- Introduction of mooring buoys and navigational lights to the area and the negative impact to the Natural visual/scenic features of the area;
- Potential hazards that the operation might be to navigation of the significant numbers of recreational boaters that frequent the area year round;
- Potential conflicts with recreational uses and with adjacent upland properties that are zoned recreational or residential or recreation marine uses;
- Potential negative impacts to local marine and adjacent upland tourism, associated commercial activities and the enjoyment of residential properties;
- Conflict with Thetis Island Official Community Plan Policy 2.7 Mariculture and;
- There are potential conflicts with Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Islands Trust Policy Statement.

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When the Local Trust Committee (LTC) received the recent application for rezoning, it was reviewed at a public meeting of February 28, 2023. The applicant attended the meeting and answered questions from the LTC, the most significant being:

- What had changed with this application since 2020 that they thought it may be well received by the community and the LTC, since the previous application was turned down; and
- Had the applicant consulted with Penelakut Tribes and other First Nations.

The response to the above questions was generally, that nothing of significance had changed and that they had not consulted with Penelakut Tribes or other First Nations. The applicant was advised at the meeting that they should consult with the Thetis Island community through a Community Information Meeting and consult with Penelakut Tribes.

In the period of time leading up to the meeting (on November 7, 2023), the LTC has received many letters, emails and phone calls in opposition to the rezoning. The applicant did hold a virtual Community Information Meeting at which there were approximately 30 attendees including the applicant and Thetis Island Local Trustees. Most, if not all, members of the public were not in favour of the application. Many of the comments were regarding negative impacts to the area and questioning what benefits there would be to the Thetis Island community. The applicant provided responses during the meeting to comments and questions. Since the Community Information meeting, the Local Trust Committee has received many more letters of concern and clear opposition to the rezoning.

The LTC thinks it is important to note that the current Official Community Plan (OCP) amended in recent years and the previous OCP both had restrictive zoning in place regarding marine aquaculture. The Thetis Island community is very familiar with marine aquaculture as there are a number of oyster leases already in place and that geoduck farming has been being conducted on a converted lease not far from the current rezoning location. There have been environmental issues associated with plastic pipe with this lease operation since 2019.

The recent OCP review confirmed the community's concerns regarding aquaculture and the community has purposefully retained restrictive zoning in this regard. The Thetis Island community have concerns about the existing lease use and potential for species changes with no notice to the public. There is no social or economic benefit to the Thetis Island community and the community has made it clear to the Local Trust Committee that there is strong opposition to this application.

The Thetis Island Local Trust Committee asks the Minister to respect this community and the Local Trust Committee's rejection of this application and to deny issuance of the tenure for Crown Land File 1414783, which is subject to the use being in conformance with local bylaws. The above denial to advance the application does not provide the applicant with conformance of this work in the existing zoning.

Sincerely,



Tobi Elliot
Chair, Thetis Island Local Trust Committee

cc: Thetis Island Local Trust Committee
Jessica Outhwaite, Section Head, Ministry of Forests
Islands Trust Executive Committee
Islands Trust Website

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