



Reference: 240752

August 9, 2018

Susan Morrison  
Acting Chair, Islands Trust Council  
200-1627 Fort Street  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V8R 1H8

Dear Susan Morrison:

Thank you for your letter of July 11, 2018, to Premier John Horgan, regarding the designation of the Islands Trust area for Rural Dividend Program and Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) funding.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development is the provincial government's lead on rural development for British Columbia. As the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Rural Development, Lands and Innovation Division (RDLI), I have been asked to respond to your letter.

This ministry is committed to helping rural and Indigenous communities build their capacity to develop sustainable and resilient futures. A key component of the ministry's rural development mandate is the Rural Dividend Program, which is administered by RDLI. The program provides \$25 million a year to assist rural communities with a population of 25,000 or less (located outside the Capital Regional District and Metro Vancouver) to reinvigorate and diversify their local economies.

As you note in your letter, permanent exceptions to the eligibility criteria have been provided to the Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Island Electoral Areas. An exception to the eligibility criteria was also provided to Bowen Island for the fifth intake, which took place June 1 – July 31, 2018. I am excited to hear that the program received applications from Island Trust communities in the recent intake.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement we will be completing a review of the Rural Dividend Program to ensure it continues to meet the needs of rural stakeholders. A further examination of a permanent exception for Bowen Island can be explored as part of this process. I encourage you to monitor the program for updates.

Please note that ICET falls within the mandate of the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology (JTT). Ministry staff at JTT have advised me that they have begun engaging with ICET to explore a possible regulation change to include the CRD electoral areas of Juan de Fuca,

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Susan Morrison, Islands Trust Council

Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands in the ICET service area. This process will involve extensive consultations with both ICET and other stakeholders in the region.

Again, thank you for taking the time to express your views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. D. Peterson".

Dave Peterson  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Rural Development, Lands and Innovation  
Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

pc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia