



News Release

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Islands Trust Invites Comments on its Draft 2019/20 Budget

VICTORIA - The Islands Trust Council welcomes public comments on its draft 2019/20 budget.

Highlights of the 2019/20 budget as compared to the previous year include:

- a total budget of \$7.89 million;
- 3% decrease in total expenditures from the 2018/19 budget;
- 59% decrease in the amount of funds being spent from the surplus fund;
- 2% projected tax increase overall for the Islands Trust Area (other than Bowen Island Municipality);
- 13% projected increase in Bowen Island Municipal tax levy;
- 2% wage increase for all union staff per the BCGEU Collective Agreement;
- 1.95% increase in expenses to pay for the newly legislated provincial health tax;
- 2% increase to trustee remuneration (per Policy 7.2.1 on Trustee Remuneration and the anticipated rate of inflation for 2018; to be verified when updated information is made available by Stats Canada).

“Trustees look forward to receiving the public’s input on the priorities the Islands Trust should set for the financial year ahead,” said Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “In developing the draft budget, the Islands Trust Council has sought to balance, in an accountable and fiscally responsible manner, the needs of island communities and our mandate to preserve and protect.”

The draft budget is based on the assumption that existing service levels will be maintained and that Islands Trust will proceed with the following initiatives: strategic plan project work; community and First Nation engagement for the Policy Statement amendment project and potential *Islands Trust Act* amendments; digital and online communications/engagement improvements; electronic document management and photo management projects; and continuation of the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Authority funded by a special property tax requisition levied in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area. The draft budget will also support the following staffing changes: a new temporary Covenant Monitoring and Outreach Specialist; and a one-year extension of the Freshwater Specialist staff position.

In terms of how Bowen Island’s taxes are calculated, the Province of British Columbia included a formula in the *Islands Trust Act* to calculate the amount to be requisitioned from an island municipality in the Islands Trust Area for the cost of operations of both the Trust Council and the Islands Trust Conservancy. The draft 2019/20 budget would result in a Bowen Island Municipality tax contribution of \$332,658, an increase of \$38,725.

Public comments received by February 11th will go to the Islands Trust Council’s Financial Planning Committee which is responsible for developing the annual budget. The Financial Planning Committee will consider all feedback received by the deadline when making its budget recommendations to Trust Council. Trust Council will also review the public’s feedback before approving the final budget at its quarterly meeting March 12-14, 2019 on Gabriola Island.

The details on the budget proposal, link to the survey and options for feedback are available at www.islandstrust.bc.ca/budget.

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Preserving **island** communities, culture and environment

Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

The Islands Trust is a federation of local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and another 10,000 non-resident property-owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, co-operation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.

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