



# News Release

200- 1627 Fort Street Victoria, BC V8R 1H8

Telephone **(250) 405-5151** FAX: (250) 405-5155

Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 660-2421. Elsewhere in BC **1.800.663.7867**

information@islandstrust.bc.ca www.islandstrust.bc.ca

March 25, 2019

2019-09-IT

## ISLANDS TRUST COUNCIL DECLARES CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Coast Salish Territory, Gabriola Island — Islands Trust is joining local governments around the world in declaring a climate change emergency. At its recent meeting on Gabriola Island, the Islands Trust Council voted unanimously to join Vancouver, the Capital Regional District, Los Angeles, London, and a growing number of regional and local governments internationally in calling for an urgent response to the threats and costs posed by climate change.

The impacts of climate change are being felt everywhere. For the islands in the Salish Sea, those impacts can be seen through more extreme and unpredictable weather patterns, sea level rise, increasingly acidic oceans, and drier summers characterized by smoke-filled air due to forest-fires in nearby jurisdictions.

“This declaration came out of a recognition that, given our unique mandate and the seriousness of the situation, the Islands Trust has to join other communities and take a leading role in our region to address climate change,” said Peter Luckham, Chair of the Islands Trust Council. “This declaration commits us to intensifying our efforts to better match the urgency of the climate change emergency identified by scientists. We will seek to work with local communities, First Nations, partner agencies, and other levels of government to pursue an absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in this very special region.”

The climate emergency declaration was co-sponsored by Trustee Deb Morrison (North Pender Island) and Trustee Scott Colbourne (Gabriola Island). The emergency declaration commits Islands Trust staff to providing Trust Council with a report on actions and tools that could be implemented to decrease emissions, to reach out to the various First Nations in the Trust Area to see if they would like to work collaboratively on potential climate action strategies, and to ensure those most impacted by climate change are being supported.

It also directs the Trust Council Chair to communicate directly with regional districts and the provincial and federal governments, asserting Trust Council’s commitment to help meet carbon-reduction targets and calling for increased resources for local governments as they intensify local actions.

A **Backgrounder** follows on the next page.

.../2

## **Backgrounder**

The full motion to declare a climate change emergency, passed unanimously at Trust Council's March meeting on Gabriola Island:

- 1. Declare a Climate Change Emergency in the Islands Trust Area.**
- 2. Add climate change mitigation, resilience, and adaptation policies to the Islands Trust Policy Statement amendment project.**
- 3. Direct the Trust Council Chair to write to the Chairs of Regional Districts in the Islands Trust Area asserting Trust Council's full support for declarations of a Climate Emergency;**
- 4. Direct the Trust Council Chair to write to the Provincial Minister of the Environment, asserting the Islands Trust Council's support to help the Province close the 25% emissions gap in the CleanBC Plan, and calling on the Province to provide the powers and resources to local governments;**
- 5. Direct the Trust Council Chair to write to the Federal Minister of the Environment, asserting the Islands Trust Council's support to help Canada meet its Nationally Determined Contribution target made in the Paris Agreement and call on the federal government to provide the powers and resources to local governments.**
- 6. Direct staff to report back to the June 2019 Trust Council meeting on measures and land-use planning actions that the Islands Trust can take to advance progress toward Local Trust Committee climate reduction targets and achieve further reductions in carbon from Trust operations.**
- 7. Direct staff to include a central focus on equitable climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience into strategic planning to provide guidance and support for the Trust Area's efforts to transition away from fossil fuels in ways that consider those most vulnerable to climate impacts and most in need of support in transitioning to renewable energy.**
- 8. Trust Council directs staff to work with First Nations and First Nations government agencies to seek support for the climate change emergency and to engage to coordinate climate action strategies with First Nations within the Islands Trust Area.**

- 30 -

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.

**CONTACT:** Peter Luckham, Chair, Islands Trust Council 250.210.2553  
 Russ Hotsenpiller, Chief Administrative Officer, via Andrew Templeton,  
 Communications Specialist, 250.405.5156