



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](mailto:information@islandstrust.bc.ca)  
Web [www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca)

December 2, 2019

File No. 4700-20

via e-mail: [howesoundbri@gmail.com](mailto:howesoundbri@gmail.com)

Ruth Simons  
Chair, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative  
PO Box 465  
Lions Bay, BC V0N 2E0

Dear Ms. Simons:

**Re: Support for Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound being designated an UNESCO Biosphere Reserve**

On behalf of the Islands Trust Council, I am writing in support of Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound becoming a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserve.

During the September 17-18, 2019 Islands Trust Council meeting, the following resolution was passed:

***That Trust Council endorse the Howe Sound Biosphere Region application to UNESCO, on the condition that the initiative is supported by the First Nations whose territory encompasses what is known as Howe Sound.***

In March 2019, the Islands Trust Council passed a Reconciliation Declaration and in June 2019 adopted a Reconciliation Action Plan. In addition, we have committed to the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the recommendations of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and are pleased to know that the Biosphere Region designation is underpinned by UNDRIP.

The Islands Trust Area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island, including Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound. The Islands Trust Area is a unique and special place composed of 13 major islands and more than 450 smaller islands covering approximately 5,200 square kilometres of land and water. Approximately 26,000 people live on these islands, another 10,000 people are non-resident property-owners and 28,000 Coast Salish Peoples consider the region their homeland.

The Islands Trust is governed by the provincial *Islands Trust Act* which states that the Object of the Trust is to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.

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The islands of the Islands Trust Area are grouped into twelve 'local trust areas' and one 'island municipality'. Every four years, each area elects two trustees. These twenty-six trustees sit on the Islands Trust Council, which in turn elects four of its members to sit on an Executive Committee. With the exception of the two municipal trustees from Bowen Island, all trustees also sit on a local trust committee, a three-person body made up of two local trustees and a member of the Executive Committee appointed as chair.

The Islands Trust Policy Statement, approved by the British Columbia Minister of Municipal Affairs in 1994, includes the following statements:

*The principle of sustainability must be upheld. Protective measures are varied and can include actions ranging from preservation of natural areas in the form of parks and ecological reserves, to increasing public awareness and understanding of the need for sustainable use and stewardship by all landowners.*

*To achieve its Object, the Islands Trust must be an educator, coordinator, and initiator, guiding individuals, organizations and other agencies in support of the object. While the Islands Trust can provide the necessary leadership, responsibility for stewardship of the Trust Area rests with many. Individuals, other government agencies, organizations, and the Province itself all have important roles to play. Cooperative actions are required of other agencies, organizations and individuals to ensure that activities are carried out in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of Trust Area ecosystems and island communities.*

Of note, Policy 3.1.9 states:

*Trust Council encourages actions and programs of other government agencies which:*

- *place priority on the side of protection for Trust Area ecosystems when judgment must be exercised,*
- *protect the diversity of native species and habitats in the Trust Area, and*
- *prevent pollution of the air, land and fresh and marine waters of the Trust Area.*

Thank you for considering our endorsement of the Howe Sound Biosphere Region application to UNESCO, on the condition that the initiative is supported by the First Nations whose territory encompasses what is known as Howe Sound.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Luckham  
Chair, Islands Trust Council  
[pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca)

cc: Islands Trust Area MPs  
Islands Trust Area MLAs  
BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation  
Cowichan Tribes  
Halalt First Nation  
Homalco First Nation  
Klahoose First Nation  
K'ómoks First Nation  
Lake Cowichan First Nation  
Lekwungen (Songhees) Nation  
Lyackson First Nation  
MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nation  
Penelakut Tribe  
Qualicum First Nation  
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation  
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation  
shíshálh First Nation  
Snuneymuxw First Nation  
Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation  
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation  
SḶÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation  
Stz'uminus First Nation  
SXIMEŁEŁ (Esquimalt) Nation  
Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation  
Tsawwassen First Nation  
Tseil-Waututh Nation  
T'Sou-ke Nation  
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) First Nation  
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation  
WJOLEŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation  
WSIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation  
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm Musqueam  
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group  
Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society  
Nanwakolas Council  
Te'mexw Treaty Association  
WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council  
Naut'sa mawt Tribal  
First Nations Leadership Council  
Gambier Island Local Trust Committee  
Bowen Island Municipal Council  
Islands Trust Council  
Islands Trust website