



Islands Trust

200 - 1627 Fort St., 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**

Email: information@islandstrust.bc.ca
Web: www.islandstrust.bc.ca

December 23, 2019

File Number: 0400-20

Via Email: ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca

Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
200 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard
Gatineau, Quebec
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Wilkinson:

Re: Working Together to Preserve and Protect the Environment

On behalf of Islands Trust Council, I would like to extend our congratulations on your re-election and your appointment to Minister of Environment and Climate Change. We are pleased that you have been appointed to this critical role given the important work that you have done in the past on the West Coast and within the Salish Sea area. Your understanding of the beauty, fragility, and significance of this area to First Nations Peoples and to all Canadians is going to provide sensitivity and respect toward decision making in preserving and protecting this area.

As Chair of the Islands Trust Council I can tell you that the Islands Trust was created through the provincial *Islands Trust Act*, and is a federation of special-purpose local government bodies elected by 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and approximately 10,000 non-resident property owners. The Islands Trust Area is located within Coast Salish territory and is the homeland to over 28,000 Coast Salish Peoples who have called this place home since time immemorial. The Islands Trust mandate is to preserve and protect the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, and education. We fulfil this role in cooperation with First Nations and other agencies, and through advocacy with organizations and community. The Islands Trust area covers the islands and waters of the Salish Sea between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. The area includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5,200 square kilometers – it reflects the beauty and vitality of the Salish Sea.

The region is a scenic archipelago that provides habitats for an exceptional variety of species: more than 200 types of migratory and resident birds, more than 90 species at risk (according to the Federal *Species at Risk Act*), numerous species of fish, the iconic Orca whale, migrating Gray whales and diverse intertidal life, terrestrial wildlife and vegetation. The significance and sensitivity of the region, and the need for protective measures was internationally recognized in 1973, when an International Joint Commission proposed that the islands and waters adjacent to the British Columbia-Washington State border be protected as an international park in order to maintain water quality, and to preserve and protect marine and land-based wildlife habitats and archaeological and cultural sites of the Coast Salish Peoples.

.../2

Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
December 23, 2019
Page 2

To this day, extra vigilance and special measures are warranted as this region is among the most productive marine ecosystems in the world and includes the highest density of species at risk in Canada. Given the sensitivity and significance of the area more work needs to be done to work together to meaningfully engage to protect and preserve this critical area. Over the last year, Islands Trust Council and Local Trust Committees have strived toward the implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan and the guiding principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. We note that your mandate letter also commits to this important work, as well as the work to protect biodiversity and species at risk. We would like to support you in this mandate and look forward to finding opportunities to work together. Specific to that goal, Parks Canada is assessing the feasibility of establishing a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve in the Southern Gulf Islands region and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has established critical habitat for several species at risk.

If time permits, I invite you to visit the islands where I would be more than happy to show you first-hand the beauty and significance the Islands Trust Area.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Luckham
Chair, Islands Trust Council
pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca




Attach: Map of Islands Trust Area Species At Risk

cc: BOKÉCEN (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
Sḵwǰwú7mesh (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
WŚIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation
x^wməθk^wəyəm Musqueam
First Nations Leadership Council
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group
Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society
Nanwakolas Council
Naut'sa mawt Tribal
Te'mexw Treaty Association
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website

CRITICAL HABITAT FOR FEDERALLY-LISTED SPECIES AT RISK

N



-  Islands Trust Area Boundary
-  Critical Habitat for Species at Risk
-  Critical Habitat for Orca Whale

0 5 10 20 Kilometers
1:1,000,000