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January 17, 2020

File Number: 0400-20

Via email: pm@pm.gc.ca

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Working Together in the Islands Trust Area

On behalf of Islands Trust Council, I would like to extend our congratulations on your re-election.

As Chair of Islands Trust Council, I can tell you that Islands Trust was created through the Province of British Columbia's *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 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 – reflecting the beauty and vitality of the Salish Sea.

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 region is more than a scenic archipelago; it 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 Southern Resident killer whale; migrating gray whales; diverse intertidal life; terrestrial wildlife and vegetation. The significance and sensitivity of the region, and the need for protective measures, were internationally recognized in 1973. At that time, 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, curb development, preserve and protect marine and land-based wildlife habitats and preserve and protect the cultural heritage of archaeological and cultural sites.

We cherish this place and govern it in trust for all Canadians. It is for this reason, that Islands Trust supports the Oceans Protection Plan and your commitment to the ecological health of Canada's coasts. We have written to you and the Ministers of Environment and Climate Change; Transport; and Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard expressing concern on a variety of issues. Some of these issues include reducing aquaculture industry marine debris, eliminating vessel anchorages in the Islands Trust Area, and putting greater protections in place against oil spills.

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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 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. As well, Islands Trust Council declared a climate emergency as we see the impacts of climate change to biodiversity, habitat, and sea level rise. We note that your recently provided ministerial mandate letters include implementation of the whole-of-government plan for climate action, as well as work to protect biodiversity and species at risk. We would like to support you in these effort and look forward to finding opportunities to work together.

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 of the Islands Trust Area.

Yours sincerely,



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

Attached: Map of Islands Trust Area

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
Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
SĀÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation
Stz'uminus First Nation
SXIMEŁEŁ (Esquimalt) Nation
Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tsleil-Waututh Nation
T'Sou-ke Nation
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) First Nation
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation
WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation
WSIKEM (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

