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October 2, 2020

File No.: 12-05-6410-03-2020

Via Email: Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca

marc.garneau@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Claire Trevena
Minister of Transportation and
Infrastructure
PO Box 9850 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T5

The Honourable Marc Garneau
Minister of Transport
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N5

Re: New Brighton dock – Gambier Island, Howe Sound, British Columbia

Dear Minister Trevena and Minister Garneau:

On behalf of Islands Trust Council, I am writing to request your assistance on an important matter affecting the Gambier Island community in the Islands Trust Area. The community located on the southwest peninsula of Gambier Island, in Howe Sound, is facing the very real prospect of losing its primary port facility, the New Brighton dock. The dock has provided critical public access to the community for over a century. It provides passenger ferry access, local moorage, and is the critical remote access point for basic services, including emergency services. The Islands Trust Council requests your assistance to ensure that this critical public access point is preserved.

The community on Gambier Island's southwest peninsula has no schools, shops, or medical services. Access to these services is by water, via the New Brighton dock. Originally constructed in 1917, the New Brighton dock is the only all-season sheltered port and is the community's primary access point for work, school, supply delivery and emergency services. It is the only port on the island serviced by BC Ferries, designated as route 13. Route 13 is a contracted passenger ferry service, making ten trips to New Brighton dock daily, amounting to upwards of 35,000 people trips annually. The dock is a deep-water port with a pier structure and floats providing moorage for approximately 22 small boats. It is situated within provincial Water Lot 5087 (New Westminster District) and is approached directly by a public road maintained by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

In 2001, and then again in 2012, Transport Canada contacted the Gambier Island Community Association ("GICA") and the Sunshine Coast Regional District ("SCRD") and expressed its intention to divest itself of the New Brighton dock. In 2012, in consultation with the GICA, the SCRDC communicated its willingness to Transport Canada to enter into negotiations to transfer the dock to the SCRDC. Transport Canada transferred ownership of the New Brighton dock to the Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish Nation) in 2013.

At the time of divestiture, the Squamish Nation was to maintain public access and use of the dock for five years through an Operating Agreement. The Operating Agreement term has now expired and public use and access to the dock is now in question. We have been told that Squamish Nation staff have advised GICA there are several potential private sector buyers interested in the dock, but Squamish Nation Council may also consider public ownership as an option.

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The New Brighton dock generates no revenue and is not supported by local taxation. The local community is small and does not have the financial or administrative wherewithal to acquire and operate the port. We are very concerned that the sale of the dock to a private entity could result in the end of passenger ferry service, local moorage, and the critical remote access point for emergencies. An additional negative consequence of such a transfer is the possible loss of access to the community's only barge-loading facility, which sits within the same water lot, the development of which was approved by the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Highways in 1998. While that critical piece of infrastructure is completely independent of the New Brighton dock, insofar as the divesture process was concerned, a transfer of Water Lot 5087 to a private sector buyer of the dock may negatively affect the community's use of and access to the barge ramp. We understand that the Province of B.C. is currently the holder of Water Lot 5087; it was not transferred to the Squamish Nation.

Gambier Island's southwest peninsula community has been put in the untenable position of potentially losing its primary public port access. The community has been advocating to federal, provincial, regional elected representatives, and the Squamish Nation Council to support a joint solution.

The community needs a provincial or federal commitment to preserve the New Brighton dock as a public facility. With this in mind, Islands Trust Council requests that the Province of British Columbia or Transport Canada acquire the dock from the Squamish Nation, and/or assist in the acquisition of the dock by a public entity such as the Sunshine Coast Regional District. In this way, the New Brighton dock will be preserved as a critical transportation hub and lifeline for a small, but growing, community in the Islands Trust Area.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Yours truly,



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

Cc: The Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Doug Caul, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
John Allan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources and Rural Development
Squamish Nation Council
Sunshine Coast Regional District Board
Nicholas Simons, MLA, Powell River-Sunshine Coast
Patrick Weiler, MP, West Vancouver - Sunshine Coast – Sea to Sky Country
Mark Collins, BC Ferries President and CEO
Gambier Island Local Trust Committee
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website