



700 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC V0R 1X3
Telephone **250-247-2063** Fax 250-247-7514
Toll Free via Enquiry BC in Vancouver 604.660.2421 Elsewhere in BC **1.800.663.7867**
Email northinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca
Web www.islandstrust.bc.ca

March 31, 2021

File No.: 5590-30; 6410-03

Via email: CITZ.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services

Via email: josie.osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Hon. Josie Osborne
Minister of Municipal Affairs &
MLA, Mid Island-Pacific Rim

Via email: reachme@danielarbour.ca

Daniel Arbour
Director, Electoral Area A

Via email: dleitch@srd.ca

David Leitch, Chief Administrative Officer
Strathcona Regional District

Via email: jwarren@comoxvalleyrd.ca

James Warren, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Comox Valley Regional District

Re: Support for Connected Coast by Denman Island LTC

Dear Minister Beare, CAO Leitch, Deputy CAO Warren, Minister Osborne and Director Arbour,

On behalf of the Denman Island Local Trust Committee, I am writing to support the application by the Connected Coast fibre internet project (<https://connectedcoast.ca/>) to install landing sites and last mile service on Hornby and Denman Islands.

Currently, Internet service on both islands is unavailable in some areas and unreliable in many others. Plentiful evidence of this, and of its numerous adverse effects, is available at www.hornbydenmaninternet.com. This site contains the results of in-depth research and analysis by the Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation and the Denman Island Internet Committee (a committee of the Denman Island Ratepayers' Association).

Inadequate Internet service has severe negative impacts on the economy and on community resilience and diversity. Income-generating opportunities on the Islands are limited by geography, and adequate internet services are essential to address this.

The need to improve economic sustainability on Denman is acute. The average tax-filer income on Denman Island in 2015 was \$62,025, which is 23.6% lower than the Comox Valley Regional District average income, and 43.6% lower than BC (Statistics Canada 2017a, quoted in the *Denman Island Housing Needs Assessment*). This grim economic picture feeds into numerous social and health challenges, which ultimately cost the taxpayer money to address.

As well as supporting a stronger local economy, improved Internet is essential for access to medical care, education, family, community, social contacts, political engagement, and more.

Trust Council, the regional governing body for the Islands Trust, has been advocating for several years for the inclusion of Denman and Hornby Islands Trust (as well as several other islands in the Trust Area) in the Connected Coast Initiative, as directed by a resolution made by Trust Council.

Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis

The following excerpts from a September 15, 2019, letter from Island Trust Council Chair Peter Luckham to Minister of Citizens' Services Jinny Simms document the Islands Trust position:

"I am writing on behalf of the Islands Trust to request further funding and support for the Islands Trust Area communities that have not been included in the Connect to Innovate and Connected Coast initiatives, namely Denman Island, Hornby Island, Gabriola Island, Thetis Island, Galiano Island, Mayne Island, South Pender Island, and Keats Island. During the June 18-20, 2019 Islands Trust Council meeting, the following resolution was passed:

That Trust Council, by a letter signed by the Chair, request the appropriate agencies of Canada and the Province of British Columbia to take steps to facilitate and fund the safe and reliable improvement of internet connectivity throughout the Trust Area and in particular to encourage the provision of additional landing sites to service areas in the Trust Area that may request such service through the Connected Coast project.

"... improved, high-speed broadband internet connections for residents in rural and remote communities will in turn help to improve their quality of life. Improved connectivity can help community members to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions via reduced travel, access education and health services, participate in economic opportunities that are compatible with the conservation of island resources, and better participate in the decision-making processes of all levels of government.

"Please note that we encourage a process whereby all service providers are required to prevent or lessen impacts on cultural, archaeological and sacred sites as per the Islands Trust Reconciliation Declaration."

The Islands Trust appreciates your consideration in expediting approvals for the landing sites and last mile service.

Sincerely,



Sue Ellen Fast,
Chair, Denman Island Local Trust Committee

cc: Denman Hornby Internet Working Group, Karen Ross, Chair at karenross@telus.net
info@hornbydenmaninternet.com
Denman Island Residents Association, dira.residents@gmail.com
Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation, karen@hiceec.ca
Denman Island Local Trust Committee

Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis