

From: Islands2050
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 10:09 AM
To: Islands2050
Subject: FW: letter for inclusion in Agenda Package for July 8 Trust Council meeting
Attachments: Maffi & Rapport.Open Letter to Trustees re. object of Islands Trust Act.docx

From: Luisa Maffi [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 21, 2021 5:17 PM
To: SSIInfo <ssiinfo@islandstrust.bc.ca>; information <information@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Cc: Luisa Maffi [REDACTED]; David Rapport [REDACTED]
Subject: letter for inclusion in Agenda Package for July 8 Trust Council meeting

To Trust Staff:

Kindly include the attached letter from myself and David Rapport (SSI residents) in the Agenda Package for the July 8, 2021 Trust Council special meeting.

We sent this letter as an open letter to all Trust Area Trustees on May 20, prior to the previous Trust Council meeting, on the topic of the revision of the Trust Policy Statement, and specifically on the issue of whether the Trust should reaffirm that preserving and protecting the Trust Area environment is paramount in its mandate.

Our letter was not included in the previous meeting's Agenda Package, so we would like it to be included in the package for the July 8 meeting. While we realize that some of the details about motions, which we touched on in the letter, have been superseded, the substance of what we had to say is still highly relevant to the ongoing revision process. Therefore, we do wish for our views to be part of the official record.

Please acknowledge receipt of this document and confirm that it has been included in the July 8 Agenda Package. This cover letter might also be included in order to provide the context. Thank you.

Regards,

Luisa Maffi and David Rapport

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Unity in Biocultural Diversity - Together we can!

Luisa Maffi (Dr.)
Co-founder/Director, [Terralingua](http://Terralingua.org)

Editor, [Langscape Magazine](#)



Salt Spring Island
BC V8K 2N6, Canada



Salt Spring Island, May 20, 2021

Dear Trustees:

In view of the upcoming June 2021 meeting of Trust Council, we are writing to voice in the strongest possible terms our request that Trust Council reconsider the following motion, which was defeated at last March's Trust Council meeting:

“that Trust Council affirm its understanding that the paramount object of the Islands Trust Act is preservation and protection of the natural environment.”

We wish to urge Trust Council to table this motion again and vote in favor of it. In our view, the fact that this motion was defeated the first time around stems not only from a profound misconception of the object of the Islands Trust Act as such. It also stems from a profound misconception of our relationship—as individuals and as communities—with the natural world.

The environment is not “out there”, separate from us. We are in it, and it is in us. What we do to it, we do to ourselves. What happens to the health of our ecosystems is the bottom line of whether we ourselves and future generations can live healthy and safe lives. It's not a matter of some mythical balancing act between the needs of nature and the needs of humans—as a number of Trustees seem to believe, including our own SSI Trustee Laura Patrick. There are no trade-offs here, no “a little bit of this, a little bit of that”. If we don't work first and foremost to ensure the health of our ecosystems, there's no way that we can ensure the health and well-being of our communities.

To ensure the protection and preservation of our natural environment, so that it remains healthy and can continue to support is, is what you were voted in to do. You're not politicians bound to address every issue under the sun to make your constituents happy so you can get voted in again next time. You are (or are meant to be) a special breed of people entrusted with making difficult—and yes, sometimes unpopular—decisions for the preservation and protection of the environment.

THAT is the ultimate meaning of the much-quoted clause “*for the benefit of the residents of the Trust Area and of British Columbia.*” To claim (as Trustee Dan Rogers has done in response to letters that Trust Area residents have already sent out) that said clause implies balancing the needs of the environment with human needs is a red herring. There is NO higher human need than to preserve and protect the environment that sustains us and all other species on earth.

Does it mean (as the same Trustee suggested in his Open Letter) that, if any human activity affects the Trust Area's environment, then Trustees should say no to it? Not at all! That's another red herring. All species, including us, modify the environment to a lesser or greater extent in the process of ensuring their own survival and subsistence. **What it DOES mean for the Trustees' decision-making process is that each proposed human activity has to be considered—both individually *and* cumulatively—for how it might affect the health (proper functioning) of our ecosystems, which are already heavily stressed by anthropogenic pressures from local development all the way to climate change.** And if the proposed activity is going to add

significantly to the already existing pressures, then it should be denied or scaled back to reduce its impact as much as possible.

Yes, we DO live here, and we DO need to be able to live here even if we're not wealthy—especially if we're not wealthy, in fact. We, all of us in the Gulf Islands (and anywhere in the world!), need to (re)learn how to live more modestly on this earth, satisfying our basic needs within the inevitable limits of the natural environment, taking pleasure in a simple life in a healthy environment, and savoring the joys of community, instead of wantonly chasing money, power, and wants.

Your collective energies would be much better spent in ensuring that protection and preservation of our Trust Area environment creates the conditions for the above to be possible, rather than in engaging in a “popularity contest” to win the favor of a vocal “affordable housing” constituency that—no matter how well meaning—is pushing you to pit human needs against those of the ecosystems on which all our lives depend.

Please do reconsider the motion in question and vote in favor of it this time.

Sincerely,

Luisa Maffi and David Rapport