

**From:** elissa poole [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 25, 2026 10:02 AM  
**To:** Islands2050  
**Subject:** draft Trust Policy Statement

[REDACTED] Salt Spring Island, BC

24 Jan 2026

To the Trustees and Staff of the Islands Trust:

I have recently attended two of the public information sessions on Salt Spring Island regarding the *draft* Trust Policy Statement (TPS). In the course of these meetings many people spoke about their reservations about this new version and their serious concerns that the mandate of the Islands Trust will no longer be adequately protected. Only two people were wholly in support of the new version in either meeting (the same two), a small percentage of those present. Worth noting, as well, is the existence of a “Friends of the Gulf Islands” survey about the TPS, with currently 1744 signatures in support of maintaining the protections and definitions as they exist now in the current TPS, which has been operative for many years.

There are several ways in particular that the new *draft* TPS weakens environmental protections enshrined in the mandate of the Trust:

- a) It does not uphold growth limits. For example, Salt Spring Island’s growth limits have been set at 17,000, based on build-out of current zoning – and recent environmental studies suggest that Salt Spring has already reached carrying capacity, even without adding the allowable 5,000 more people to the island. The *draft* TPS places no limit at all on population, despite potential climate change impacts on water, infrastructure and other resources. There must be curbs on development. That’s the Trust’s *raison d’etre*.
- b) Directives are meant to be requirements. However, the directives in the *draft* TPS are often phrased as suggestions; ie., instead of saying “Trustees *must DO the following*” many directives merely say: “Trustees *must CONSIDER doing the following*”. As one of the attendees of the second meeting remarked, this makes a directive toothless. Directives are mandatory, and the Executive Committee should not be permitted to make exceptions.
- c) A special section on housing, ironically, is where one finds directives as requirements. Trustees here **MUST** support a variety of listed policies, policies which could pave the way for density increases and zoning changes.
- d) Projected increases in density are made in the name of affordable housing, and yet at no place does the Trust insist upon binding agreements that will ensure **LONGTERM** affordability. Instead, these zoning changes are likely to create housing at market rates, hardly affordable for most of the workforce. Current policy states that changes in zoning for more

density can only be used for affordable housing. That policy should be maintained. Both affordable housing and attainable housing should be defined, as well.

e) The word “environment” MUST be defined as the “natural” environment. It must not be defined in broader terms to include infrastructure, tourism, the community, etc. There has been an attempt to do just that, misinterpreting (ignoring, rather) what the word *unique* does to restrict the meaning of the phrase “unique amenities and environment”. The rather deceptive directives to “identify and prioritize” protection of various ecosystems do not go far enough to ensure true and lasting protection of the natural environment, nor do they protect against excess development. Not all ecosystems are listed for protection, and there is a focus on “unfragmented forests,” a phrase which is undefined and leaves much to chance (how many acres does a forest have to be to be considered “unfragmented?”), and does not take into account the fact that fragmented forests are still valuable, especially when contiguous with other natural ecosystems.

There’s much to suggest that this TPS was designed to allow the kind of development that *draft* Bylaw 530, which would have permitted accessory dwelling units on most properties throughout Salt Spring Island, was meant to greenlight. That Bylaw sparked a great deal of protest and was withdrawn, presumably because it contravened the current TPS. This *draft* TPS, with its focus on “managing development” rather than “limiting it,” would open the door to market-based development, with no requirements for binding agreements for affordability.

I would also like to mention here that the survey the Trust has put together seems designed to elicit a generally positive response numerically, given the large number of questions that have to do with respecting indigenous rights and cultural heritage (which we applaud, as do most islanders) vs the small number that explicitly deal with housing policies. Yet the latter have alarming implications for the long-term health of island ecosystems and facilitate the very development the Trust is meant to restrict. In other words, one could have very serious objections to this TPS draft while still “agreeing” to a significant number of the policies as presented in the survey. It would thus be unethical to use this survey’s statistics as support for the *draft* TPS.

I urge the Trust to withdraw this TPS draft and retain the one we have now; and I urge Minister Boyle, cc’d here, to refrain from approving this draft, inasmuch as it essentially bulldozes right through the Trust’s mandate.

With respect,

Elissa Poole [REDACTED]

Timothy Pickstone [REDACTED]

cc: The Honourable Ms Christine Boyle, Minister of Municipal Affairs

The Honourable Mr Rob Botterell, MLA