

**From:** SUSAN EVANS [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 24, 2026 9:06 AM  
**To:** Islands2050  
**Cc:** Rbotterell; Minister; Susan Evans  
**Subject:** Draft Trust Policy Statement

### **Re: Draft Trust Policy Statement**

As a 40-year resident of Salt Spring Island, I have made a concerted effort to inform myself about the Draft Trust Policy Statement (TPS) and to consider its potential ramifications.

I believe the TPS goals are admirable. I am pleased to see policies intended to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and to address climate change. However, I am concerned that several fundamental draft TPS policies—particularly those related to the goal of fostering sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities—undermine the Trust's object to preserve and protect the natural environment and unique amenities of the Trust Area. In fact, the draft allows for development that I believe would erode these very values.

The sample letter prepared by Friends of the Gulf Islands clearly and effectively articulates many of my concerns, and I have used it as a guide in preparing this submission.

### **Environment**

The term “environment” appears throughout the draft TPS but is not defined. A definition had previously been included but was removed as being too broad. Nonetheless, a definition remains necessary to clarify that the Trust Object was, and continues to be, largely focused on protecting the natural environment for the benefit of all British Columbians. Without clarity on the scope of this term, it is open to broad interpretation, potentially undermining the intent of the Trust Act.

### **Growth**

The draft TPS proposes to “manage” growth rather than to “limit” it. The TPS requires a clear directive to limit growth. The natural environment and rural character of the islands cannot be sustained without firm growth limits. The Islands Trust was established in 1974 specifically to protect the islands from unrestrained growth and development.

A directive is needed requiring each island to prepare a Build-out Report based on current zoning, along with a Growth Limits Report that identifies the population level each island can sustainably support. These reports are essential to protecting limited resources such as freshwater, native ecosystems, and rural character.

### **Enforcement of the TPS**

The introductory text of the draft TPS should be corrected where it states that directives “should” be followed “where possible.” The TPS distinguishes between advisory policies and directive policies. Directives are mandatory. While directives use

the term “must,” the draft elsewhere weakens this requirement by suggesting they are optional. TPS directives must be clearly mandatory; otherwise, they effectively become advisory. All bylaws and Official Community Plans must be consistent with TPS directives, as required by the Trust Act, without exception.

### **Ecosystem Integrity**

While the draft identifies various ecosystems (such as forest, watershed, and marine ecosystems), it does not provide clear direction on how they are to be protected. The directives should require the establishment of Development Permit Areas for the explicit purpose of protecting ecosystem integrity.

### **Affordable Housing**

Density increases should be permitted only for genuinely affordable and workforce housing, secured through binding housing agreements. Such increases must be appropriate in scale to each island and contingent upon adequate sewage disposal capacity and sufficient water to serve both new and existing development while protecting the natural environment. I have addressed my views on housing in greater detail in a separate letter.

### **Water Supply Knowledge**

The TPS should include directives requiring that local knowledge be considered, alongside other sources of information, when assessing the condition of island water supplies. It should also require monitoring and reporting on the importation of water and the increasing incidence of saltwater intrusion into wells.

### **Climate Change**

Climate change is addressed only briefly in the draft TPS. It should be a major focus, as the Trust Area is already experiencing—and will continue to experience—significant impacts, including sea level rise, coastal erosion, diminishing freshwater supplies, and increased wildfire risk.

### **Rural Character**

The TPS should include stronger policies and explicit recognition of rural character as a defining and valued amenity of the Trust islands. Currently, “rural” is mentioned only once, in relation to the identification and protection of rural roadways.

### **Context**

Unlike the current TPS, the draft includes very little information in its introduction about the history and purpose of the Islands Trust. This context should be restored, as it is essential for the public to understand the intent, importance, and enduring value of the Trust Act.

Sincerely

Susan Evans

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SSI, V8K 2P7

Jan 23, 2026

cc Rob Botterell MLA  
Christine Boyle HMA