

From: Deborah Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 6:25 PM
To: Islands2050; HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca; rob.botterell.mla@leg.bc.ca
Subject: TPS survey re: Project 2050

Dear Trust Council,

I am a long-time Salt Spring Island resident (15 years) and a professor of journalism at the University of Victoria. I am writing to express grave concerns about the process that has led to the draft Trust Policy Statement currently under consideration.

First, let me say that genuinely affordable housing for full-time island residents is in the interest of all, especially as these islands are attractive to speculators and real estate developers and those in the business of the vacation rentals that have taken so many long-term rentals off the market. Affordable housing is, fortunately, already permitted under the current regulations.

I will address this letter to some worrying elements of the process around the current TPS.

1. In spring 2025, then Minister of Housing, Ravi Kahlon, told Trust Council that the TPS must follow the “ecological mandate” of the Islands Trust Act. This warning has been ignored in the draft TPS, which favours private development.
2. Normally each island has two trustees, but there is currently only one representing the largest, Salt Spring Island, who is also the chair of the Trust Council & Executive Committee. When decision-making is so concentrated, it undermines trust in the democratic process.
3. Major public consultation took place in 2019-20, which found that most islanders want to strengthen Trust protections. That led to a draft TPS that was suddenly shelved before its first reading. The new draft, which we are (falsely) being told builds upon that original consultation, does the opposite. It weakens the mandate to the point of negating its founding purpose: to preserve and protect these islands for all British Columbians. This is especially important as we face serious water shortages, dry wells, clear-cutting, etc.
4. The “new” window for public consultation was extremely short. There was only one so-called public town hall, held only online, in the back to school week in September 2025, when most islanders were unable to attend. The few dozen who took part (among roughly 30,000 islanders) were required to submit questions in advance, and reported having their questions changed or never addressed.
5. A major residents’ group, Friends of the Gulf Islands, has a large petitions with 1800 signatories opposing the current TPS, yet just as this petition (and another on Salt Spring’s OCP update) began gathering force, Trust Council voted to establish new barriers to receiving petitions.
6. Just as the local newspaper began reporting on controversies around this draft TPS, Trust Council decided to slash the publishing of official public notices in local newspapers and move them to American-owned Facebook. This is a common strategy used by municipalities seeking to bring the press to heel.
7. About half a dozen OCPs are being revised at the same time as the TPS review, yet you can’t make an OCP if you don’t know the legal parameters of the TPS, which all OCPs must abide by. Many islanders are confused as to which document they are responding to, especially as this process makes no sense.
8. The guiding interpretation of this new draft TPS was adopted during an in-camera meeting of trustees in 2023, the details of which remain unknown. We are only told that Trust Council has redefined the term “unique amenities and environment,” subject to legal protection under the Trust Act, to “include issues such as, but not limited to, housing, livelihoods, infrastructure and tourism.” (Islands Trust Statement, Sept 26, 2023)
9. That set the stage for the confusing new draft TPS, which requires a legal degree to understand. It has plenty of aspirational language with no legal weight, but where there are binding directives, they open wide loopholes for the kind of development and speculation the Trust was designed to prevent.

I ask that this draft TPS be put on hold and rethought, pending genuine and thorough public consultation. Islanders, and these vulnerable islands, deserve a proper democratic process.

Sincerely,

Deborah Campbell