

From: R Wright [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 1, 2026 7:11 PM
To: Islands2050
Cc: HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca; Rob.Botterell.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Subject: Draft Trust Policy Statement

Dear Trust Council and staff,

I am a third-generation BC resident who has known the Trust islands over 30 years and made Salt Spring my home for more than 20. I object to the new draft Trust Policy Statement (TPS) on two main grounds: a) the process had been misleading, secretive, and seriously flawed; b) the new TPS would undermine the Trust and unleash mass development.

1) The Process

We are being told this TPS derives from extensive public outreach during a "Phase 1" in 2019-2020. Yes, there was wide public engagement in 2019. More than 1600 people gave detailed input at open houses, information booths, on ferries, and elsewhere.

The public's top priorities were: 1) connection to nature; and 2) strengthening the Trust's protection of the natural environment. Top public concerns were ecosystem damage and water scarcity, along with too much tourism, logging and building. These findings were summarized in the 2020 report "What We Heard." After further input from islanders and Indigenous bodies, a draft TPS was scheduled for First Reading by Trust Council in July 2021.

Due process would have been to discuss further concerns and amendments in open sitting from First Reading through Third. But the 2021 draft TPS didn't get any reading at all. It was derailed just as Council was about to debate it —only days after Salt Spring's Local Trust Committee claimed that some members of the public "do not feel they were appropriately consulted." Additional outreach was promised, but never done. Today's draft TPS, by contrast, already received its First Reading —before any new public outreach at all —in July 2025.

Before drafting the new TPS began two years ago, an unknown number of trustees met in September 2023, behind closed doors, to reinterpret the *Islands Trust Act's* core mandate: "to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment." Trust Council then announced the egregious view that "unique amenities are broad-ranging and may include issues such as, but not limited

to, housing, livelihoods, infrastructure and tourism." (If this were so, such amenities would not be unique to the Trust Area, and there would have been no point to the *Trust Act* in the first place.)

Making key public policy in secret is a serious breach of process. Yet Trust Council has never withdrawn its deliberate misreading of the Trust mandate, a misreading on which this draft Policy Statement hangs.

2) Content of the Draft TPS

Veiled by lofty aspirations lacking any legal weight, the new TPS favours development and growth—putting nature, water, Indigenous concerns, and the islands' rural character at serious risk. It promotes urban density schemes that would allow many units on lots currently zoned for one (housing directives 3.4.11; 3.4.13; 3.4.14). Environmental impacts of development need only be "considered" (goal 4 directives 3.4.1; 3.4.3). Trustees are directed to preserve "ecosystem integrity" only in a patchwork, not the Trust Area as a whole (goal 3, directives 3.3.1). The top housing directive is for "attainable" housing, a term undefined and unregulated (housing directive 3.4.11). Truly affordable housing, which everyone supports as long as it has binding guarantees to keep it affordable, gets only one mention.

This draft TPS threatens to remove public policy from public hands, and open the Trust islands to "exploitation by real-estate developers and speculators"—the very thing the *Islands Trust Act* was established to prevent. (All-party Select Standing Committee 1973.)

It must be withdrawn, or the islands as we know them will be lost.

Sincerely,

Ronald Wright, Salt Spring Island

cc: Minister Christine Boyle, MLA Rob Botterell