

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 8:00 PM
To: Islands2050
Cc: HMA.Minister@gov.bc.ca; rob.botterell.mla@leg.bc.ca
Subject: Islands Trust TPS Survey

Dear Trust Council,

I will not be completing the Survey because I believe the draft Trust Policy does not align with the spirit of the Islands Trust Act and instead focuses on growth and development over protection for the environment. Having recently moved to Salt Spring Island, I know that I have a lot to learn about the politics and issues facing us. I have been heartened by the many people I have met that share my concerns and I feel obligated to share them with you.

In my former career as an actuary and pension consultant, I have had the opportunity to work with many organizations and governments on projection models and governance documents. It is through this lens that I share some of my concerns.

Revising the Trust Policy document is no easy task, and I acknowledge a lot of time, money and effort that has gone into this draft. Having said that, I must say that the current draft reads like a boiler plate document that has not gone through the rigorous editing process. In addition, I am not in favour of the focus on “attainable housing” while little to no improvements or changes have been made to the environmental protection sections. While I applaud the Trust Council's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, much of the wording is educational and subject to updating as new guidance is released. It seems to me that much of these important principles would be better contained in a living document that can be updated without amendment, and referenced in the Trust Policy. While the current Trust Policy is dated, it provides historical contexts and reads like a document whose community cares deeply for the environment and its unique amenities. Some of this grass roots feeling is desirable.

The housing crisis is not unique to Salt Spring. Having moved here from Toronto, I've witnessed the challenges and impact of housing insecurity. This crisis has been decades in the making. In 2020, changes to the zoning in my former neighbourhood to increase density – laneway housing – was rolled out. These changes may have improved the statistics and optics, but also resulted in traffic congestion, increases in property values and lined the pockets of developers. Housing insecurity for those most in need are remedied by public funding.

I agree we need to look at creative solutions to the housing needs, but we need to also ensure we understand the projection numbers and get clear science based answers to the question of if the Islands can support more growth. While I applaud the BC government performing the Housing Needs Assessment 2025, such projections can be severely skewed for small populations like our Islands. Care must be placed on the inputs and the appropriate tweaks made. For example, how has the seasonality of our gig workforce been taken into consideration (those that move off island in winter months); is the COVID impact of individuals moving to the Islands temporarily been accounted for appropriately; do the population projections take into account the commercial constraints for the Islands, etc. I hear all kinds of housing needs numbers bouncing around – is it 4,000?, is it 2,500? and so on. One thing is certain, we know that the projection numbers will be wrong, they always are. The draft Trust Policy mandates the “clustered housing” solution. This is a concept that is strongly put forward by local organizations with ties to developers and I am very concerned that the draft Trust Policy lists clustered housing as a Directive must be considered. There are no clear development limits in the draft and vague wording about assessing the environmental impact.

Islands Trust TPS Survey

I believe we should adopt the Precautionary Principle to the draft Trust Policy. This is a document that should be used for years to come. As Trustees you have an obligation to preserve and protect the islands. Don't rush it, it's not ready!

Sincerely,

Kiersten Johnston

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