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File: 0110-20

Friends of the Gulf Islands Society  
[www.friendsofthegulfislands.ca](http://www.friendsofthegulfislands.ca)

VIA EMAIL: [info@friendsofthegulfislands.ca](mailto:info@friendsofthegulfislands.ca)

Dear Friends of the Gulf Islands Society,

**Re: Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy Amendments Feedback**

Thank you for your submission and for your continued engagement on bylaw compliance and enforcement matters. The purpose of this Bylaw Enforcement Review project is to have policies and procedures that are administratively fair, reasonable and transparent with an aim of restoring public confidence. We recognize the importance of any concern raised regarding fairness, transparency, and maintaining public confidence.

The question of Local Trust Committee (LTC) involvement in enforcement was considered directly by the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) in July 2025, including in light of the Ombudsperson's comments. RPC acknowledged the need to maintain a clear separation between elected officials and front-line enforcement staff, and concluded that the draft policy achieves that separation while providing a clearer framework for strategic, policy-level direction rather than operational decision-making. Trust Council reviewed the same matter in September 2025, agreed with RPC's assessment, and endorsed the draft policy.

Determining whether a contravention exists, how evidence is gathered, and how an investigation proceeds remain professional responsibilities of staff. Any LTC direction made regarding proactive enforcement must occur through resolutions made in open meetings.

Section 12 of the draft policy amendments formalizes practices that already exist in many local trust areas rather than creating new powers. It enables an LTC, if it chooses, to adopt discretionary enforcement policies or procedures within its area. These may address matters such as prioritization or deferral in light of available resources, the relative impact of different types of contraventions, community priorities, approaches to notification or proactive enforcement, as well as the use of discretion in closing files, and regular reporting.

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***Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea***

*Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis*

The revised policy also provides greater clarity around staff discretion and reinforces the importance of consistent professional judgment. Decisions to open, prioritize, investigate, or close files remain operational decisions made by staff within the approved policy framework.

Staff are necessarily remote and visit episodically. Local trust committees have continuous, on-the-ground knowledge of local conditions, history, access constraints, and community impacts. When enforcement decisions are made entirely off-island, without meaningful local input, residents experience the system as arbitrary and unresponsive and this may erode public trust. A bylaw enforcement process that cannot be adjusted in light of local knowledge is more likely to produce unfair outcomes. Local Trust Committees enact many of the Bylaws for their residents and are therefore accountable for ensuring they are applied in a way that takes account of people's unique circumstances, and prioritizes infractions of most concern to the community.

You raised concerns about the potential for favouritism or corruption. These are serious matters. Trustee conduct is governed by provincial legislation and Trust Council standards of conduct, which require trustees to act impartially, provide equal service, discharge their duties without fear or favour, and uphold public confidence in the integrity of Islands Trust governance. These obligations apply to all trustees, including when acting through LTC resolutions. As you may know, the Province is currently reviewing standards of conduct, and Trust Council will consider any necessary updates to its policies once that work is complete.

With respect to environmental harm, the intent of the policy is to support timely responses where impacts may be significant. Professional judgment in applying that intent remains with staff, informed by available expertise and established guidance.

Thank you again for your continued interest in this work and for contributing your perspective.

Sincerely,



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Cc: Mairead Boland (Chair, Regional Planning Committee)