

From: Anne Burdett [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2025 9:31 AM
To: David Maude <dmaude@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Cc: Deb Morrison <dmorrison@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Aaron Campbell <acampbell@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Brad Smith <bsmith@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Big Digem application

North Pender Local Trust Committee

Re: Concerns Regarding Rezoning Application for Big Digem (Rural to Industrial)

Dear NPLTC,

We are writing to express concerns regarding the rezoning application submitted by Big Digem Excavating to change the property's designation from Rural (R) to Industrial (I). As our community continues to engage in discussions about appropriate industrial uses on North Pender, it is important to consider this application within the broader context of the recent Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Review and the long-standing principles that have guided industrial zoning on the island.

Context From the LUB Review

During the recent LUB Review, the community and staff spent significant time navigating the relocation of one existing industrial business—a concrete plant—that had been operating on rural land, and the subsequent move of the waste-management operation to that same industrial site. Importantly, the concrete plant rezoning is still in process and has not yet received final approval.

These rezoning efforts have been lengthy and have required substantial engagement from staff, trustees, and the public. They were intentionally crafted to reflect narrow, site-specific industrial uses that align closely with the operations occurring on each property.

Historically, every industrial zone on Pender Island has been site-specific, each tailored to a single, clearly defined purpose. For example:

One industrial lot zoned specifically for boat storage,

Another for gravel storage,

One for a concrete plant (still in process)

One for manufacture of goods,

- One for Highways Road Maintenance,
- One for Waste Transfer Facility

Each zoning was justified based on operational need, location suitability, and the community's capacity to absorb associated impacts.

Scope and Scale of the Proposed Uses

In contrast, the current Big Digem application seems to seek approval for a wide range of industrial uses, all on a small parcel of land. The application includes:

- A contractor yard for Big Digem Excavating
- Aggregate storage and retail sales
- RV and shipping-container storage
- Superior Propane storage
- A shop area for equipment maintenance
- Demolition waste-management bin storage
- Parking for employee vehicles
- Storage and parking for the full fleet of excavating and trucking equipment

To be clear, many community members, including us, are not opposed to the idea of rezoning the property for an appropriate industrial use. The concern lies with the scale and intensity of the proposal, which combines multiple substantial industrial activities on a property with meaningful physical limitations.

Community Concerns and Precedent

Much of the community concern arises from the reality that the proposed level of operations appears disproportionate to the parcel itself. Pender Island has historically approached industrial zoning cautiously, incrementally, and with careful attention to the impacts on neighbouring properties, natural systems, transportation corridors, and rural character.

There is also a significant concern regarding precedent. Approving such a broad suite of industrial uses on this small parcel may influence expectations for the adjacent parcel. While the current owners may not wish to pursue rezoning, future owners may see this decision as justification to apply for Industrial zoning. Granting multiple intensive industrial uses on one small lot may create a benchmark that future applicants rely upon.

Given the sensitivity around industrial zoning and the considerable effort invested in rationalizing industrial land use during the LUB Review, the community is understandably cautious.

Request

We respectfully request that the NPLTC approach this rezoning application with the same careful scrutiny applied during the LUB Review. This level of scrutiny should apply consistently to all rezoning applications—past, present, and future—to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with community values and planning principles.

The breadth of the proposed uses and the overall intensity of operations on such a small rural lot require comprehensive evaluation—not only in relation to current policy, but also in considering the long-term cumulative impacts and precedents that could arise from this decision.

Thank you for your time and your continued service to our community. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,
Michael and Anne Burdett