

To: **Islands Trust Council**; cc. Russ Hotsenpiller (Chief Administrative Officer)

Re: **Islands 2050 Consultation Process**

Date: August 25, 2020

*DELIVERED BY EMAIL*

Dear Trustees,

**REQUEST:**

**We the undersigned respectfully request that Trust Council put all policy development work related to the Islands Trust Policy Statement on hold until a more extensive and inclusive community consultation process is completed.**

**We also request that all committee work conducted to-date by Trustees is made public in the interest of transparency and continued dialogue.**

**EXPLANATION:**

The undersigned represent a number of organizations in the Trust Area that are engaged in social equity, affordable housing and climate change work on our respective islands.

We are submitting this letter to express our collective concern for the recently released “*What We Heard*” report that summarizes the community consultation completed in 2019 for the **Islands 2050** process, to update the Islands **Trust Policy Statement**.

Our specific concerns are as follow:

1. **Less than 4% of the Islands Trust population participated in the 2019 consultation activities.** This is a low engagement number, especially given the importance of the subject. There appears to be a general lack of public awareness as to the importance of the Policy Statement, and the fact that a review of the Policy Statement is underway. The potential implications for our communities of a revised Policy Statement is not commonly understood, in our opinion.
2. **No demographic information is provided in the report** to identify the age, gender, income, ethnicity, housing status, etc. of respondents. It is impossible to know if the diversity of our communities is adequately represented, including populations who have historically been disenfranchised from public decision-making processes.

3. **The three questions asked in the consultation do not give meaningful consideration to social equity, affordable housing and economic development in our communities**, and how these topics are inter-connected with climate change mitigation and adaptation, and climate justice.

The above concerns raise the likelihood that the Islands 2050 process is not aligning with its own stated Guiding Principles for inclusion, access, conversation and collaboration. It is troubling that staff and members of Trust Council are moving ahead with recommendations for changes to the Policy Statement with such limited public input.

**Our concern for the process is compounded by reports that one or more of the committees tasked with reviewing the Policy Statement are interested in removing Section 5 ("Sustainable Communities") and instead intend to focus entirely on a one-dimensional and antiquated view of the "natural environment."**

***For a land use planning agency to proceed in these troubled times without a mandate for sustainable transportation, housing, economic development and social equity is of concern to many on the islands*** — and could be self-harming to any chances we have at climate change mitigation and adaptation, and climate justice.

Thank-you for considering our request for increased public consultation and transparent public discussion on the Policy Statement review process.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors of:

1. **Salt Spring Solutions**
2. **Islanders Working Against Violence**
3. **Hornby Island Housing Society**
4. **Hornby Island Resilience Initiative**
5. **Galiano Chamber of Commerce**
6. **Hornby Island Community Economic Development Corporation**
7. **Salt Spring Island Community Economic Development Commission**
8. **Saturna Island Residents and Ratepayers Association**