

From: Islands2050
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 12:43 PM
To: Islands2050
Subject: FW: Concerns about the proposed Islands Trust policy
Attachments: my letter toIT.docx; ATT00001.txt

From: Susie Washington-Smyth [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 2:00 PM
To: Executive Admin <execadmin@islandstrust.bc.ca>; MAH.minister@gov.bc.ca; premier@gov.bc.ca
Cc: Paul Brent <pbrent@islandstrust.bc.ca>; Lee Middleton <lmiddleton@islandstrust.bc.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Concerns about the proposed Islands Trust policy

> Please see the attached letter outlining my concerns with the Islands Trust's proposed policy changes.

Susie Washington Smyth
[REDACTED] **Saturna Island, British Columbia, V0N2Y0**
[REDACTED]

June 22, 2021

Islands Trust Executive Committee

I am writing to object to the proposed redraft of the Islands Trust Policy. I object not just to the content of the proposed policy but more importantly to the inadequate consultation process that was implemented during COVID shut down. My recommendation is to scrap the draft policy and rethink a more inclusive consultation process post the next Islands Trust election. In fact, the need for any policy change should be part and parcel of the next election. It is too important a change to fast track. May I remind you the mandate of the Islands Trust is to meet the needs of the residents the island communities. At present this policy exercise does not.

To support my concerns I note the following:

The results of a Public Engagement process (Sept. 2019 – January 2020) were first published in July of 2020 when a document entitled “What We Heard” was put up on the IT website.

Despite public criticisms of both the formatting of questions, and haphazard demographic representation, it remains the bedrock evidence that due public consultation has taken place. But for those who perhaps missed reading the presentation, the summary findings were based on:

- 557 people who attended open houses and/or information booths
- 132 people who spoke to IT staff on ferries
- 148 people who browsed printed materials;
- 789 who participated on “Thought Exchange” (i.e.: completed the actual on-line survey questionnaire).

Depending on how total relevant population is calculated, this ‘widespread public engagement’ is approximately 4-6% of the some 26,000 island residents to whom IT is accountable. And, since demographics were not obtained, who exactly these participants are, or whether even this small sample was representative. Further, many residents of the islands have had limited access to community meetings during covid and are not necessarily technologically adept. Thus, information channels about the policy have been limited.

But there is a more egregious deficiency in the design and ongoing implementation of “Public Consultation” component:

Islanders have been informed that concurrent with the above process, a second, and completely independent. conversation has been taking place with First Nations representatives. There remains no publicly available information about either the context of this consultation, exactly who was consulted, nor any summary findings of such consultation.

This is an astonishing decision in that it both isolated that separates two stakeholder groups and effectively shut down any common dialogue about our common future. I use the word “astonishing” since Reconciliation was identified as one of the three key themes of the Policy Statement. If reconciliation is to occur doesn't it make sense that ongoing dialogue among stakeholders must necessarily be a foundational component of reconciliation. Moreover, the creation of two parallel consultations tracks, suggests several underlying assumptions, all of which are both untested and odious.

- by whose authority has the Islands Trust become the official spokespeople for First Nations and why is it necessary to intercede, and prevent First Nations from joining in a common consultation directly for themselves?

-given the deficiencies in the public consultation process for island residents, on what basis should we not suspect that the consultation with First Nations isn't equally flawed?

Finally, I want draw attention to a small note in the Staff Documents, (preceding the actual Policy) that state it is First Nations 'expectation that this policy be adopted before the end of this term of office. How was this expectation created and why are islanders only hearing about it now?

To summarize, isn't the mandate of the Trust to meet the needs of island residents? This fast track approach to a substantial change of policy needs to stop. This type of proposed change needs to be an election debate so island residents are given an opportunity to have input into this significant change.

Susie Washington Smyth

cc. Minister of Municipal Affairs
Premier of British Columbia