

**From:** SIRRA <info@sirra.ca>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 30, 2021 10:19 AM  
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**Subject:** Concerning July 8th First Reading of Draft Islands Trust Policy - from Saturna Island Residents and Ratepayers Association

**From:**  
Saturna Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (SIRRA)  
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**To:**  
Trust Council and Executive  
Islands Trust Council  
All trustees individually  
Islands Trust 2050

Minister for Municipal Affairs and Deputy

**Copied to:**

MLA's  
MLA Nanaimo – North Cowichan  
MLA Saanich North & the Islands  
MLA Parksville – Qualicum  
MLA Mid-Island – Pacific Rim  
MLA Powell River – Sunshine Coast  
MLA West Vancouver – Sea to Sky

Ministers:

Premier John Hogan

Minister and Deputy Minister of Environment & Climate Change Strategy

Minister and Deputy Minister of Agriculture , Food and Fisheries

Minister and Deputy Minister of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation

Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development

Dear Friends,

The Islands Trust Council has scheduled a special meeting to consider a first reading of the Islands Trust Policy Statement Draft Bylaw No. 183 on July 8, 2021. This Draft represents a significant overhaul of the existing policy<sup>[1]</sup>.

Reaction from a large number of Saturna Island Ratepayers and Residents Association (SIRRA) members and others is one of alarm. On their behalf, SIRRA asks that you urgently take action to ensure this first reading is appropriately deferred pending full engagement with islanders by their local trustees.

### **Why is our Board so concerned?**

Public Consultation with the islanders affected by this document is inadequate. Consultation, such as it was, took place during a pandemic when very many people were unable to participate.

Changes to the document are substantial and require time to review. This document first came to public attention in mid June. For minor updates and amendments this might not necessarily be a late arrival, but for such significant changes to the IT Policy only a very small window of time has been allowed for needed review before the first reading.

We believe that proceeding with a first reading will lend unwarranted support to this draft. Several trustees from the Trust Programs Committee, one-half of the committee, voted in favour of delaying the first reading.

### **Public Consultation has been inadequate - especially in light of the scale of the changes proposed:**

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 question formats and the poor demographic representation, the data from this program of activities are presented as evidence that due public consultation took place.

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’ was limited to between 4-6% of some 26,000 island residents to whom IT is accountable

The most recent public engagement was through an anonymous survey - entirely online – in February 2021. Islanders were isolated due to the pandemic and the community meetings and social gatherings used by many to stay informed, were cancelled. Many of the target demographic for these public consultations are not technologically aware. (406 people took part in this survey, 1.5% of the population and biased towards those who are technologically adept)

SIRRA is surprised that there is little information available about the context and results of consultations with First Nations representatives.

**Changes to the document are substantial and require time to review.**

The Policy Statement Draft is not a minor revision: it represents a totally new mandate and priorities. We believe that there are significant changes which need a great deal of time to consider. The public is being asked to critically review a 100-page plus information package before the first reading on July 8th

**A first reading will lend an unwarranted appearance of support to this draft**

SIRRA believes that proceeding with a first reading will make it very difficult to raise questions or effect changes thereafter.

From the Policy Statement Amendment FAQ<sup>[2]</sup>:

***5. Why isn't there community consultation on the draft planned before first reading?***

.....

*With 26 trustees representing a diversity of islands, there is a desire to know that Trust Council is comfortable with the draft document before asking people to dedicate their time and effort to giving feedback on it.*

The admitted purpose of the first reading is to achieve a level of common agreement between the 26 trustees. Many IT trustees believe that engagement with their constituents is crucial BEFORE such a reading. Both Saturna Island IT trustees are of this opinion.

Note that at the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Trust Programs Committee a motion was made that a recommendation be made to the Trust Council that the first reading should be deferred until trustees could present the draft Policy to their constituents on each island. The vote was evenly split - 5 for and 5 against. In the absence of a majority the status quo prevailed – i.e., that the Trust Programs Committee recommend that the planned first reading be held.

In closing we ask that you hear the request from islanders and others for a fair opportunity to engage in plans for protection of the environment and amenities on each island: that is, a proper role in shaping their future.

We trust that you consider our request to defer this first reading of the Policy Statement Draft until IT trustees agree that fair engagement has taken place, and that you will act accordingly,

Sincerely,

SIRRA

Chair: David Osborne

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[\[1\]](#) Islands Trust Policy Statement Consolidated – April, 2003

[\[2\]](#) Information package for the Trust Council Special Meeting July 7th/8<sup>th</sup>