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From: David Bird [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, July 5, 2021 11:18 PM

To: information <information@islandstrust.bc.ca>

Subject: Comments & suggestions for Draft 2.0 of the Policy Statement

RE: Draft 2.0 Policy Document

Dear Islands Trust council members,

I write to you from Gabriola Island with my thoughts on the new draft policy to be considered for first reading this July 8th, 2021. In general, I support the revised policy statement and the direction it provides for the local trust committees and the revision of the local community plans. I am relieved to see that preservation of the environment is prominently the priority in the policy, and makes a specific acknowledgement that planning must take climate change into account. Furthermore, I am heartened that the IT has committed to a meaningful working relationship with the First Nations of this unique region. I would ask the trustees to reconsider some parts of the policy, however. Firstly, I would ask that sections that are ambiguous be clarified by fuller statements, rather than specific words with implied (but not explicit) meaning. Secondly, I would ask that, where appropriate, evidence-based science take precedence over social science. My rationale for these requests follows.

In the policy document, certain words are chosen that in the context, their meaning is not clear, but from observing the recent committee meeting (June 11, 2021), these terms often have much implied in them. For example, in section 6.1, the draft policy statement expects that developments be "compact" (6.1.2). When committee members asked what this term meant, a staff member began to explain, at great length, the intention of the use of the term "compact" – with so much implied meaning, a clear and commonly shared understanding of the term is essential. Without being clear, each Local Area could take a very different interpretation of the original intention. Compact, for example, might mean that new houses should all be "tiny homes" or that vaulted ceilings should not be permitted. Clarity is essential in a policy document!

In the second point, I am concerned about the prominence given to social science, especially when the policy does not state what social science is being referred to, economics? Psychology? How does Social Science influence how, for example, fresh water stewardship is maintained? It implies that somehow, human behaviour and needs should influence how the LTCs manage watersheds. This concerns me, as the environmental science should inform us what is necessary to manage and preserve natural environments, not, say, how economics provides a method of monetizing resources. There is an implication here that compromise, in order to meet priorities identified by social science, must be found between preservation and use of the resource. The implication of compromise is clearly present when one compares the commitments of trust council for different policies. For example, in the policies related to fresh

water, forest, agricultural land, and Coastal & Marine stewardship, the inclusion of "social science" is present (4.2.1, 4.3.1, 4.4.1). However, soil stewardship (4.5.1), no referral to being informed by social science is present. This is also the only natural resource that is explicitly prohibited from being extracted. Thus, the implication is clear: if humans are involved in the extraction, use, and/or harvest of a resource (i.e. water, forest, marine resources), then social science must be considered. As if, if stewardship might affect human use of the resource, than similar weight that is given to the scientific evidence, must also be given to the social sciences. However, what is necessary to sustain these in a healthy eco-system will be informed by science, not social science.

Policy, to be effective, must be clear and a common understanding of it shared by all affected by the policy. Please review and revise the draft to clarify what is intended. Please do not compromise the Islands Trust mandate in order to accommodate human behaviours. The highest priority for the Islands Trust should be protection of the natural environment. This must take precedence over any policies related to preserving communities.

David Bird

Gabriola Island