

To Islands Trust Council from Tony Law

re: Policy Statement First Reading

I urge Council to give First Reading to the Islands Trust Policy Statement Bylaw on July 7th.

I also urge Council, once it has given First Reading, to provide effective and clear communication to the public that

- **this document, a work in progress, is the result of 18 months of engagement, analysis and discussion;**
- **it is not a final version but one step along the way in order to provide a document for everyone to respond to;**
- **there will be four months of opportunities for responses to be submitted for consideration;**
- **Council notes that questions and concerns have been raised about a number of issues addressed in the document (such as.....) and encourages everyone to provide their comments on these and other issues of interest;**
- **based on public feedback and agency input, Council will consider amendments to the document before second reading;**
- **the version of the proposed Policy Statement bylaw that will be considered at second reading may be substantially different from the first reading version as a result of such amendments.**

I am impressed with the 2050 project, with the process so far to modernize the Policy Statement and with the draft document itself.

Having said that, I do have some concerns and suggestion to share.

But I have been waiting for first reading to be given in order to open up the next stage of public consultation – in accordance with the timeline long established by Council.

Of course, it has not escaped my attention that others have chosen to jump ahead of the process and are trying to have their say before Council has even released a first version of the Policy Statement through giving it first reading.

In fact, they are advocating that you stop first reading, even though this will provide the opportunity for their input to be received, considered and possibly contribute to amendments.

I believe it would be totally inappropriate for Council to go against its own time line and process and thereby introduce delays that could scuttle the whole project.

I note that the bylaw must be referred to Regional Districts between first and second readings.. If first reading is delayed, that will add an additional time factor. As it is, there is always slippage in projects of this nature. This could result in it not being completed before the end of term.

As a former trustee, I have seen efforts to bring the Policy Statement up-to-date flounder before the end of previous terms and then not picked up again by an incoming Council. It would be tragic to see this happen again – especially when the revisions are intended to address three of the most important issues facing us all: reconciliation, climate change and housing.

For me, such an outcome would mark the end of the Islands Trust as an effective body.

During my two decades as a trustee, I became familiar with the predictable pattern whereby many people do not take up opportunities provided to engage proactively but then go into protest mode when a product of those engagement opportunities emerges – ignoring the fact that further opportunities to engage lie ahead.

In this case, the protests have been enhanced by a well-organized campaign of misinformation and baseless fear-mongering that has manufactured what seems like broad-based opposition. Meanwhile, Council has not heard from those of us who haven't communicated yet because we have been waiting for First Reading.

If Council fails to give first reading at this time, it will not only put the whole project in jeopardy – which is perhaps the objective of some of those advocating that you do this – but will likely alienate those of us you haven't heard from yet.

In these Trumpian, populist times, it seems the noisiest group can get the most attention, even though their noise is based on alternative “facts”. I do hope that won't happen here - though I have heard one trustee say there will be hell to pay if you don't do what “they” say.

The reality might be that, if you do do what they say, they will feel empowered to continue the same tactics of misinformation and fear-mongering because that's what brought results!

Please stand firm and hold to your process so that you can hear from ALL of us in order to consider amendments in advance of second reading.

To do that, you first have to give first reading.

Thank you for considering this.

I wish you well in this important process.

*Tony Law
Hornby Island, BC
5 July 2021*