

From: Susan Swift <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, July 6, 2021 10:05 AM
To: Islands2050
Subject: Ag & Policy Statement

Hello,

On Bowen Island, many of us received the anonymous letter disparaging the draft policy statement. As someone who participated in the Open House on Bowen Island and has been tracking the progress of the development of the policy statement, I have to say it is a very good effort. I have shared the following opinions with the community here.

I am generally in support of the draft Policy Statement (having skimmed most of it and participated in the Bowen Open House, etc.) but it doesn't go far enough in advocating for the protection and expansion of farmland (organic, regenerative agricultural uses) in my view. Rather, parts of the Policy Statement look at conservation through the preservation lens of "no use is best use." And this can lead to advocating for technological "fixes" that do not "disturb land" but neither do they restore biodiversity or sequester carbon. Ill-advised approaches, including some aquaponic systems and mass production in greenhouses, rely upon distilled (often imported) chemical inputs that perpetuate conventional agriculture rather than supporting natural systems and local sustainability. Although the word "regenerative" appears in the document, I think that there could be more emphasis on the importance of soil regeneration, regenerative farming methods, and local food resilience.

There is a fair bit in the Policy Statement under the Marine heading about aquaculture. These sections, I believe, are intended to protect Indigenous harvesting of shellfish. Hopefully, these provisions won't be misused by commercial operators. All-in-all, the draft Policy Statement is a sound document with much to commend it -- from Indigenous rights and eco-forestry, to the inclusion of farming as a means to climate mitigation.

Yours,
Susan Swift
Pronouns: She, her, hers
Residing on Nexwlélexwm, in the stolen territory of the
Coast Salish Skwxwú7mesh People