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**Sent:** Tuesday, July 27, 2021 9:45 AM

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**Subject:** Islands Trust Policy Change Concerns

Dear elected representatives and public servants:

I live on Gabriola Island and am deeply concerned about the process and proposed contents of the Islands Trust Policy Statement draft revision, which I understand is now being reviewed. My background might not include climate science, but I do have some relevant coursework in sociology and anthropology as well as a Master's degree. I am also a person with a cognitive impairment from an intracranial tumour so I apologize if my writing is not more organized. Here are some of my observations after studying the document (as well as FAQ and overview), and attending three meetings of Islands Trust committees and councils.

From the outset of the so-called engagement process there has been no apparent desire on the part of this settler-centric government body to actually engage with the public it serves. Although the first reading was delayed, there seems to be a lack of commitment to

public consultation or even engagement in spite of additional funds being earmarked, with staff not wanting to rewrite or even engage in dialogue with the public. The only communication I have had was a brief conversation I initiated with an Islands Trust spokesperson sitting passively by a display on the ferry, who dismissed my opinions because they 'wouldn't be popular.'

The directive policies are far too open ended, with poorly defined terms which appear to be used as justification for taking control of residential land and homes. One of the most commonly used examples is 'indigenous ways of knowing.' I do not see how a settler-based institution like the Islands Trust can possibly understand what this means. Unless you can prove otherwise, we should cede the governance of this land to the indigenous people as it is only they who know indigenous ways of knowing.

In the present context section there is reference to wildfires as an outcome of climate change. My understanding is that the upsurge of wildfires is primarily caused by monoculture practiced by the timber industry who are allowed to spray glyphosate on all but the most combustible trees. The Islands Trusts invocation of the 'precautionary principal' to regulate homeowners while industry inflicts such atrocities on the earth and all its inhabitants is about as colonial and settler-centric as it gets.

The reference to UNDRIP is of concern, for no other reason than the history of the UN. Leave the UN out of Canadian politics. I support real resolution, ie land governance back to the indigenous people. This policy draft only galvanizes my feelings in this regard.

Perhaps the least objectionable changes are those related to affordable housing (although density increase may need to be limited in some areas for ecological reasons). I support this goal along with Indigenous leadership and voluntary environmental

stewardship by residents. However, housing is the last thing we should be centralizing (see below) among such diverse islands. How can one compare the situation on Denman with that of Gabriola, or either with Salt Spring. Here in my neighborhood on Gabriola the housing shortage is muddied by society's neglect of individuals suffering substance abuse and addictions. Most of these unfortunate folks will not be helped by affordable housing and will continue living in tents and vehicles rather than seek help on their own. As well, some folks prefer to be nomadic in the summer and rent housing in the winter. Resources might be better directed towards solving the opioid crisis along with alcoholism and methamphetamines. Eliminating the supply or source of addictive and toxic substances alone is not enough. Many if not most of these people are suffering from at least the early stages of (reversible) dementia due to brain damage from drug abuse and are victims of abuse themselves. Therapy with Ibogaine and other Indigenous plant medicines is what is needed to end this emergency and the suffering it causes. Again, indigenous leadership is necessary.

Housing policies are also in conflict with policies driven by the perceived emergency called 'climate change,' the language for which appears to be directly lifted from the recommendations of Raincoast Conservancy. Is this what the Islands Trust considers to be public engagement? Further, while directive policies such as emissions reduction may seem well intentioned, one must not ignore or diminish the social and ecological impact of mining lithium used for e-devices and machines. How affordable is this technology when such is taken into account?

Among the directive policies and purposes there are provisions that ask for extended authority over residential land, such as regulation of private docks, desalination, emissions, tree cutting, and even 'silence.' Imagine not being allowed to remove enough trees to have

sunlight needed for health and food security or no access to fresh water due to seawater intrusion into a well. This is extreme, not precautionary, and represents an attempt to control the lives of others, certainly not at all in keeping with reconciliation of any kind. Very settler-centric and should not be permitted.

Not only settler-centric but centralized, stating that all LTCs shall be consistent with IT policy which is now said to be 'less human-centric.' The FAQ doesn't mention this. Less ethnocentric is what is needed, not more misanthropic! If this is not the most Orwellian aspect, then I must have missed something like euthanasia tanks because humans is what we are, and about as sentient as it seems to get on this planet. Yes, we must live in harmony and balance with nature, but I dare say human life is more precious than most if not all other life forms on this planet. Would you sooner swat an insect or a person?

It seems like the inclusion of reconciliation is nothing more than a gesture, or perhaps thinly veiled attempt to pit humans against one another like the UN has done before. At minimum it appears intended to create social unrest. Twenty years ago I learned of the horrors of residential schools from families of victims and survivors. How is this only coming to light now? Our indigenous leaders deserve the chance to steward these lands and this document is proof that their turn is long overdue because if this draft is adopted the Islands Trust will represent the most oppressive outcome of colonialism after genocide: bureaucracy.

I ask that you take steps to amend the Islands Trust act to decentralize and de-bureaucratize the government of such diverse communities and return the government of this land to our Indigenous hosts who have been so horribly abused by their uninvited guests.

Yours Truly,

Steve MacLean

Gabriola Island

July 27, 2021

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