

From: David Dunnison [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 5, 2022 1:47 PM
To: Islands2050
Subject: Opposition to New Draft Policy: Proposed Ban on Docks Part 2 of 2

This is part 2 of 2: Opposition to New Draft Policy: Proposed Ban on Docks (I am for docks)

Part 1 was sent separately.

Regards,
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Full time resident Salt Spring Island

[REDACTED]

Islands 2050 Submission

Opposition to Ban on Docks:

Part 2: Environmental Impact and Rigorous Existing Process

(Part 1: "Evacuation Planning and Critical Infrastructure" has been sent separately)

Islands Trust 15 July 2021 DRAFT Trust Policy Statement:

4.6.7 It is Trust Council's policy that the following restrictions are necessary in order to preserve and protect the sensitive coastal and marine waters of the Trust Area:

- *new private docks should be limited to boat access only properties; (new)^[i]*

4.6.14 Local trust committees and island municipalities shall, in their official community plans and regulatory bylaws, prohibit new private docks except where properties are boat-access only. (new)^[iii]

Part 1 considered the critical infrastructure nature of private docks within the Islands Trust Area, especially in terms of primary and secondary evacuation routes.

1. All Island Trust Area properties are boat access only. Not only by definition, but by practicality.

Part 2 considers the environmental impact of docks as well as the multi-jurisdictional and rigorous requirements for construction and maintenance of docks.

Please consider:

2. Docks are not universally harmful to the marine environment. They can be beneficial and offer a convenient mechanism to reduce a major source of marine contamination – abandoned vessels.
3. A rigorous multi-jurisdictional approval process exists, including environmental and archeological assessments.

2. Docks can be beneficial in many instances and offer a convenient mechanism to reduce a major source of marine contamination – abandoned, derelict, and unserviceable vessels.

The ‘best available science’ from many studies, including a study by the University of Washington in nearby French Harbor, for example, confirms that floating docks can be net positive for sea life.

Please consider the following findings:

University of Washington:

“Floating docks provide a unique biological habitat because, unlike pilings or other fixed structures, their surfaces rise and fall with the tide. They therefore provide a habitat very near the surface for benthic sub-tidal species that normally live only at much greater depths. This gives the habitat a constancy in most physical conditions that is in great contrast with intertidal habitats, which are cyclically exposed to air and then water as tides ebb and flow.”

“...the Friday Harbor Lab floating docks host an impressively rich diversity and abundance of marine invertebrates and constitute a unique community in which space is the ultimate limiting resource”^[iii]

University of North Carolina:

“...there was no negative impact detected on the epibiota and fish from the presence of floating docks. The positive effects of increased surface area, settling, and possible shedding of organisms off the dock to the benthos are a phenomenon worth noting ...

...The organic matter from epibiota provided detritus and nutrients for the benthic community...

...As a whole, the marina basin ecosystem is not detectably impacted by the floating docks or the marina presence.”^[iv]

University of Sydney:

“Urban structures in the form of pontoons and pilings represent major coastal habitats for marine organisms ...

... Unlike terrestrial environments, urban structures in marine environments provide substrate for an abundant and diverse set of plants and animals (Sutherland and Karlson, 1977, Butler, 1991, Glasby and Connell, 1999)...”^[v]

Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience

““They create structure,” Osborne said. “Marinas have floating docks and pilings and all of this new surface area that gets colonized by organisms and so, in a way, it does create a substantial amount of habitat in an area that might not have that kind of structure to begin with.””^[vi]

It should also be obvious that partial shading from docks would have a positive benefit – acting like the temporary beach umbrellas placed by concerned residents – for intertidal species subject to future heat dome events and reduce massive die-offs such as were experienced in the Pacific Northwest this past summer.^[vii]

Aside from benefits to sea life, docks offer one mechanism to combat one of the largest sources of pollution and environmental damage within the Islands Trust Area: abandoned vessels.

Vessels moored to docks are attached to private property, property owners can be held accountable for their own docks and their own vessels. Property owners can also take steps to deal with trespassing vessels. Removing abandoned vessels not attached to a dock is much more challenging legally as owner consent is often required and ownership difficult to determine.

Docks make boat access easier for service and maintenance, for facility access and to avoid sinkings among other things where fuel spills are a common problem.



Figure 1: Tip of sunken sailboat mast and fuel mop up in Ganges Harbour December 2021. Photo: Eagle Eye Marine. (Gulf Islands Driftwood)^[viii]

As the Islands Trust’s State of the Islands Report observes, “Private docks offer waterfront owners convenient access to the water and are often a lifestyle choice that attract waterfront owners to the Islands Trust Area.”^[ix] This is a benefit to be respected and not eliminated unnecessarily.

3. A rigorous multi-jurisdictional approval process exists, including environmental and archeological assessments

It is noteworthy that Dock Applications are on the Islands Trust website list of Other Government Services.^[x] There is no fundamental need for the Islands Trust to be involved with dock permitting.

Dock approval, construction and maintenance faces stringent requirements from multiple Federal and Provincial jurisdictions (BBC MFLNRORD Land Act, BC Ministry of Environment, BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Transport Canada). These

bodies have more expertise in the marine environment within the Islands Trust Area than the Islands Trust could reasonably attain.

The requirements from these various Federal and Provincial authorities address most if not all of the Islands Trust concerns regarding docks as is expressed in the Islands Trust's State of the Islands Report.^[xi] This includes the concern about shedding Styrofoam as "The use of Styrofoam to keep docks afloat is prohibited for new construction and repairs unless the foam is encapsulated."^[xii] In addition, in terms of concerns regarding blocking of sunlight, "Docks must be constructed to allow light penetration under the entire structure."^[xiii] Construction regulations are rigorous, and you may find this publication of interest: [Marine Dock Construction and Maintenance Guidelines; Land Use Operational Policy Private Moorage](#) to become updated on current requirements.^[xiv]

Of course, dock permits are not even considered until extensive certified environmental and archeological assessments have been conducted and reviewed by these other governmental jurisdictions.

Recommendations:

Please reflect on how humans and the environment can be co-beneficiaries of the Draft Policy Statement.

Please step back and consider more fully how island residents and residents of British Columbia can derive benefits sympathetic to the environment.

Please consider how the Draft Policy Statement might incorporate the preserve and protect mandate for human enjoyment of the islands safely, along with a consideration of human life and welfare as well as with support for island societies, economies and built environment needs.

^[i] Islands Trust Council Draft Bylaw No. 183: Islands Trust Policy Statement Bylaw, 2021. Islands Trust. 15 July 2021. pp 24. Accessed at: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/draft-new-policy-statement-clean-version-july-2021/> 30 January 2022.

^[ii] Ibid.

^[iii] Amrita de Zoysa, Heather Moffat, Dan Neafsey and Simone Francis (2000). Marine Life on Floating Docks. <https://depts.washington.edu/fhl/zoo432/floats/flmain/flmain.html>

^[iv] Bergemann et al (2013). Quantifying Several Environmental Effects Associated With Floating Docks in a Commercial Marina. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Institute of Marine Sciences. Accessed at: https://ie.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/277/2016/03/mhc_floating_docks_final_report.pdf 3 February 2022.

^[v] Connell (2000). Floating pontoons create novel habitats for subtidal epibiota. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*. Volume 247, Issue 2. Pages 183-194. Accessed at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022098100001477#!> 3 February 2022.

^[vi] Cox (2017). Marinas and marine life: the unnatural habitat marinas provide. Flagler College Gargoyle. Accessed at: <https://gargoyle.flagler.edu/2017/11/marinas-and-marine-life-the-unnatural-habitat-marinas-provide/> 3 February 2022.

^[vii] Leahy. If the Hardest Species Are Boiled Alive, What Happens to Humans? The June heat wave caused billions of deaths. The Atlantic 31 July 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/07/billions-victims-heat-dome/619604/> 3 February 2022.

^[viii] Emelie Peacock. Coast Guard, Local Responders Deal With Sunken Boat And Fuel Spill In Ganges Harbour. Gulf Islands Driftwood. 17 December 2021. Accessed at: <https://www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com/news/coast-guard-local-responders-deal-with-sunken-boat-and-fuel-spill-in-ganges-harbour/>

^[ix] Islands Trust (2019). State of the Islands Indicator Project: Final Report. pp 15. Accessed at: https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TAS_2020-01-22_StateOfTheIsland_FinalReport-with-Survey.pdf 3 February 2022.

^[x] Islands Trust. Other Government Services. Accessed at: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/mapping-resources/other-government-services/> 30 January 2022.

^[xi] Islands Trust (2019). State of the Islands Indicator Project: Final Report. pp 15. Accessed at: https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TAS_2020-01-22_StateOfTheIsland_FinalReport-with-Survey.pdf 3 February 2022.

^[xii] Land Use Operational Policy Private Moorage. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. 21 January 2019. Accessed at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/natural-resource-use/land-water-use/crown-land/private_moorage.pdf 2 February 2022.

^[xiii] Ibid.

^[xiv] Ibid.