

**From:** SSI Farmers' Institute <contact@ssifi.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 16, 2025 10:44 AM  
**To:** Islands2050  
**Subject:** Regarding Draft Policy Statement  
**Attachments:** FI letter to IT re\_ OCP planning spring 2026.docx

Hello. Please find the attached letter written by the Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute Board of Directors.

Thank you  
Jeff

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## Draft letter providing feedback to Islands Trust regarding the Draft Policy Statement.

Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute

December 09, 2025

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### Comments on the Draft Islands Trust Policy Statement - Bylaw 183

#### Preamble

In reading the 2025 Draft Islands Trust Policy statement the Salt Spring Island Farmer's Institute is deeply concerned with its lack of focus on agriculture.

The following comment sums up the concerns of the agricultural community:

***'If the Islands Trust implements the policies outlined in their Policy Statement, agriculture on Salt Spring Island will be reduced to back yard gardening and food sovereignty will never be possible.'***

Terry Clement, PhD. Past President  
Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute

It is well understood that the Islands Trust Policy Statement is the document to which all land use and community planning decisions will be anchored, and as such must address the needs of the entire community.

Agriculture in all its forms must be a keystone consideration of any community planning exercise. This should be true in any community but even more so on an island with the demographics and population of Salt Spring Island (SSI). We believe that SSI cannot be viewed in the same manner as the other small Trust area islands. The Policy Statement must find a way to recognize the different needs for a community the size of SSI.

The Salt Spring Island Farmer's Institute was incorporated in 1895. Its 130 year history of operating in the community conveys the level of importance early residents placed on the social, cultural and economic contribution of agriculture to the island. That importance has not declined but continues to this day.

The Aims and Objectives as stated in the Institutes enabling Bylaw, advocates for agriculture on Salt Spring Island and the greater region. The ultimate goal, or vision is to achieve "food security and sovereignty" for residents of Salt Spring Island.

***Based on the 1996 World Food Summit, food security is defined as when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. This definition emphasizes the importance of four key dimensions:***

- **Availability:** Ensuring there is enough food produced and distributed.

- **Access:** Providing the means for individuals to acquire sufficient food.
- **Utilization:** Ensuring that the food consumed meets dietary needs.
- **Stability:** Maintaining consistent access to food over time.

These dimensions work together to ensure that individuals can lead an active and healthy life.

This needs to be reflected in the Islands Trust Policy statement, otherwise agriculture on the island will diminish over time and future generations and the community will suffer for it.

Moreover, the Island will remain subject to the uncertainties of a fragile supply chain and may be unable to fulfil its commitments to reduce community carbon emissions due to the high volume of truck transportation required. Agriculture must be recognized as an important economic driver that creates an important cultural and social fabric within any community.

The Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute has provided the following statements on agriculture and farming. These statements reflect the experience and knowledge of farmers, an agrologist, and analytical experts. We believe these points must form an essential part of the Draft Policy document.

The SSI Farmers' Institute is concerned that the following agriculture industry needs are not reflected in the directive and advisory policy statements:

**1. Agriculture Economic Policy** - Consider land uses and activities that support the economic viability of farms without compromising the agricultural capability of agricultural land or adversely impacting the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment.

In this vein, there is a need to promote an agriculture economic policy that would begin with support for agri-tourism and assist farms to be economically viable and better develop the tourism industry.

**2. Housing** – recognize need for agriculture worker housing. Without agriculture (on-farm) housing, farm workers would find it difficult to make ends meet at rental rates typical on SSI.

**3. Land Use** – manage/eliminate splitting of agriculture zoned properties. The Agricultural Land Reserve has this provision. SSI should have similar provisions to stop/reduce subdividing of agricultural land, such that this land will not be used to increase sprawl/urban creep.

In addition, if an agriculture-zoned property is altered in such a way that the financial value of the property is skewed away from agriculture, there should be a covenant on the property to ensure that the property remains in agriculture production.

**4. Define** – agriculture, agriculture unit, farmer, farm unit, intensive vs non-intensive agriculture.

**5. No mention of protection of lands outside of ALR** – ALR land protection is mentioned because that is unalterable but there is no mention of agriculture protection for properties outside the ALR but zoned for agricultural use. Surely, in a land use policy, an overall recognition of the productive potential of agriculturally zoned land would deserve recognition for the sake of food sovereignty and security. Food, sovereignty and security are not just words. They require serious deliberation, discussion, and action towards ensuring priority towards

food production. The consequences of not providing a safe and secure supply of food in the future could be devastating. ALR land alone will not be enough to meet this challenge!

**6. No mention of farming as a traditional land used to be protected.** Food production has always been a valued activity on SSI for over 130 years. Is this policy suggesting that this tradition is no longer a high priority? Are valuable traditions not going to be a priority in the future?

**7. Agriculture zones with different levels of production intensity.** There is no mention in this document of the varied nature of farming and the recognition that intensity of production may require different agriculture zones, so that farming interests can match their concept of production intensity with a defined zone that matches that intensity.

**8. Water resource protection** – “preserve, protect, and encourage sustainable farming and the sustainability of farming” as stated in the Draft Policy Statement. Is there a plan as to how to accomplish this? Sustainable farming practice is an important goal and land management professionals realize that sustainable agriculture as land use, best protects water quality. This needs to be emphasized and a strategy to encourage and support this statement.

**9. Agriculture and Adjacent Properties** - farmers need to know the level of support they will receive from the Islands Trust should any perceived infraction of a nuisance issue occur. Neighbour relationship issues can occur from farmers, and to farmers. Farmer to farmer issues can also occur. The farming issues are typically noise, but also can be dust, odour, spraying of crops, etc.

**10. Agriculture zoning, Road Systems, and non-Agricultural land use** - consider siting of roads and utility corridors to minimize fragmentation of agricultural lands but not hinder access to the agricultural use of utilities.

Agriculture zoned lands should not be used for non-agricultural industrial land use or for parking of non-agriculture equipment. Agricultural zones should be restricted to the use and seasonal storage of implements of husbandry.

### **In Summary**

In the summer, the SSI Farmers’ Institute and many other agricultural organizations attended a Land Use Workshop hosted by the Local Land Commission. It is unfortunate that the Islands Trust chose not to attend. This workshop held the potential for the Islands Trust to develop a more complete understanding of the agriculture industry related to agriculture zoning issues, farmer needs to carry out a financial and resource-based sustainable farming industry, and how agriculture and the Islands Trust might work together in the future.

The Salt Spring Island Farmers’ Institute feels that the Draft Policy document needs serious revision. With this document, we do not see the basis for an agricultural industry that can survive, thrive and provide for our growing island community, now and into the future.

Salt Spring Island Farmers’ Institute  
Board of Directors