

July 7, 2021

To: Islands Trust Council
From: Susan Yates, Gabriola Island

Re: Town Hall submission regarding DRAFT Bylaw 183, Islands Trust Policy Statement

Dear Trustees,

I urge you to make every attempt to get this Draft revised Policy Statement to First Reading in the next few weeks, if not at your Special Council meeting tomorrow, July 8.

I understand and have been a part of the revision process for the past 22 months, and have had many opportunities for input, as has every person in the Trust Area. If this Draft Policy Statement goes to First Reading, I know there will be more opportunities for public comment. I believe that the excellent revision work to date, done by Trust Programs Committee members, all of you, and staff, will continue until we have a Policy Statement worthy of the Islands Trust Act and all that this Act encompasses, and I don't want to see this work derailed or unduly delayed.

In March 2019 Trust Council adopted the two most important Declarations in the Trust's history: the Reconciliation Declaration and the Climate Emergency Declaration. The parallel revision process that has been done to incorporate the exigencies of climate change and Reconciliation is worthy of full support from Trust Council and from the public.

I cannot commend highly enough the 5 page report entitled *Truth Precedes Reconciliation*, compiled for the Trust Programs Committee's work on the Policy Statement, with the help of Lisa Wilcox, Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor. This report is an exemplary outline for Reconciliation at any level of government or public process. I have referred to it many times on my own path to understanding and acting for Reconciliation.

I could say the same for all of the work done to incorporate the Policy Statement revisions concerning the climate emergency we face; this kind of comprehensive updating, taking into account what the Islands Trust must do in the next few decades to mitigate and adapt to climate change, is crucial for our own existence and for the survival of this highly-threatened ecosystem needing our stewardship.

I have heard recently that some Trustees and their constituents feel that the process for getting to this first Draft of the Policy Statement has been rushed and I beg to differ. My first input was 22 months ago at the Salt Spring Fall Fair, and I have been reporting on (for the Gabriola Sounder) and submitting my thoughts on the Policy Statement revision, for almost 2 years.

I have also heard people complain that this is a 'brand new Policy Statement'. Yes, of course it is new; it has been almost 25 years since the last formal revision; that goes back to when I was a Trustee, when John. A. Macdonald was lauded as a hero and climate change barely registered on our environmental consciousness. Most of us could afford to rent or make a down-payment on a small place to live in those days; that too must be taken into serious consideration if the Policy Statement is to encompass human well-being.

As Trustees I hope you feel honoured to be working on this guiding document. The Policy Statement revision work is important for every Trust Island, regardless of how small or big, and it is especially important that you work together to make this document something we can all be proud of as a federation of fragile islands supporting each other and guiding us toward a better future.

You will need to make courageous decisions in order to carry the Islands Trust as far as 2050 and hopefully beyond. Putting your hearts and minds to this good work is what you were elected to do on our behalf, and I hope that decisions based on stewardship, not just resource extraction and land conversion, and guided by Indigenous ways of knowing these lands and waters, will be part of the revised Policy Statement. Since these elements are already part of the Draft revision I believe you could take this to First Reading and move forward confidently from there.