

**From:** David Dunnison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 24, 2022 10:35 AM  
**To:** Islands2050  
**Subject:** Support for New Draft Policy - Removal of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels

Islands 2050 Submission

Commitment to Support the Removal of Abandoned and Derelict Vessels

Reference: Page 26, Section 4.6.18 of *Draft New Policy Statement Bylaw No. 183 – Updated July 15, 2021*

Please count this as a submission “in support of / for” this specific proposed addition to the Islands Trust Policy Statement.

A heightened commitment to dealing with wrecked, abandoned, derelict and hazardous vessels is a welcome initiative by the Islands Trust. This is not a new challenge and has been on Islands Trust agendas for at least a decade (Draft FAQ of 2018,<sup>[i]</sup> 2012 Trust Council Briefing<sup>[ii]</sup>). This support comes with great hope that the elevation to include this subject within the Islands Trust Policy Statement can make an actual and material difference.

As George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, said in a recent press release, “The scale of the problem is massive.”<sup>[iii]</sup>



*Figure 1: Beachside wreck on Salt Spring - we need to solve this problem*

A full one-third of The Islands Trust Mandate<sup>[iv]</sup> – 18 of the 54 words – is dedicated to a commitment to cooperate with other individuals, organizations and governmental entities. When every word is precious and carefully considered, that weighting is instructive. By weight, it is the most important part of the

Trust mandate. Given the cross-jurisdictional issues related to dealing with abandoned and derelict vessels and the magnitude of the problem, there may be no greater need for and no greater test of collaboration and cooperation than this subject.

This derelict vessel problem surely must rank at or near the top of environmental challenges for the Gulf Islands and puts a heavy strain on our safety services, or community, our natural environment and our infrastructure. A Salt Spring company has reported that they lift an average of five sunken vessels a month, each typically involving a fuel spill.<sup>[v]</sup>

Our Gulf Islands communities are highly impacted and centrally located to the problem given our Salish Sea waterfront. Derelict and abandoned vessels and their debris are one thing. Illegal liveaboards another as each multiplies the problem.

The extensive impacts and issues include:

- According to the Dead Boat Disposal Society, one sunken boat pollutes the ocean roughly as much as half a million plastic straws being dumped into the ocean
- Fuel and oil spills
- Raw excrement (as much as 5 Tonnes of raw excrement annually into Ganges Harbour alone – nationally recognized by the Globe and Mail as ‘Squalor Bay’<sup>[vi]</sup> – on Salt Spring Island) and sewage from ill-fitted ‘liveaboard’ vessels and floating shanties
- Human health, public safety and loss-of-life issues, including with infants and children living at risk aboard these vessels
- Substance abuse problems
- Animal cruelty from animals confined to these vessels
- Garbage and loose objects lost overboard

Dealing with wrecked, abandoned, derelict and hazardous vessels and illegal liveaboards should be top of the list on Islands Trust’s Preserve and Protect priorities. We need to stop dumping human waste into our once pristine waters.

Recommendations:

1. Keep a light on the subject, possibly by providing a count/inventory of abandoned, dilapidated and wrecked vessels, preferably publicly accessible on-line
2. Make this a regular topic of and include a standing report for Executive Council meetings
3. Initiate and support a pump-out mandate with proof-of-pump-out regulations and enforce no-discharge zones, including a requirement for on-board equipment for moored vessels and fund year-round pump-out facilities for the major islands. These have been highly successful in reducing this problem in other jurisdictions.<sup>[vii]</sup>
4. Facilitate and encourage regular visits by Child Protection Services as well as addiction and counselling services
5. Budget and allocate funds to help deal with this problem
6. Initiate and support an awareness campaign
7. Encourage and facilitate ‘safe’ volunteer shoreline cleanups
8. Seek to invoke and put teeth into time limits for anchoring, leveraging actions from other jurisdictions such as Connecticut’s Abandoned Boat Process<sup>[viii]</sup>
9. Initiate and/or support regular land and aquatic monitoring for detection and impacts

10. Support / require all vessels anchored or moored to have valid registration and insurance

Regards, David  
Resident of Salt Spring Island



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- [i] Islands Trust Executive Committee Agenda: Draft Frequently Asked Questions for dealing with abandoned boats, barges, buoys, and docks. Islands Trust. 18 May 2018. Accessed at: [https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ec\\_2018-05-18\\_AGD\\_PKG.pdf](https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ec_2018-05-18_AGD_PKG.pdf) 23 January 2022.
- [ii] Islands Trust Briefing: Derelict Vessel Advocacy in the Strategic Plan. Islands Trust Council Decision and Information Items Agenda. 12 September 2012. pp 210-231. Accessed at: [https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TC\\_2012-09-11\\_AGD\\_PKG.pdf](https://islandstrust.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TC_2012-09-11_AGD_PKG.pdf) 23 January 2022.
- [iii] News Release (28 April 2022). Shoreline projects tackling marine debris, abandoned boats. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. Accessed at: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021ENV0029-000783> 24 January 2022.
- [iv] The Islands Trust Mandate. Islands Trust Act. Accessed at: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/about-us/islands-trust-act/> 24 January 2022.
- [v] Emelie Peacock. (17 December 2021). Coast Guard, Local Responders Deal With Sunken Boat And Fuel Spill In Ganges Harbour. Gulf Islands Driftwood. Accessed at: <https://www.gulfislandsdriftwood.com/news/coast-guard-local-responders-deal-with-sunken-boat-and-fuel-spill-in-ganges-harbour/> 24 January 2022.
- [vi] Bramwell Ryan (28 February 2016). Salt Spring Island looks for solutions amid high housing insecurity. The Globe and Mail. Online Article. Accessed at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/salt-spring-island-looks-for-solutions-amid-high-housing-insecurity/article28944499/> 24 January 2022.
- [vii] Vessel Pump-Out Services. Monroe County, Florida. Accessed at: <https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/pumpout> 24 January 2022.
- [viii] Abandoned Boats. Ct.gov. Accessed at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Boating/Abandoned-Boats> 24 January 2022