

To: Local Trust Committee

Re: Review of Short-Term Rentals and Zoning for In-Law Suites

Date: April 29, 2025

Dear Trustees,

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the stewardship of Hornby Island. As representatives of the Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC), we share the Local Trust Committee's (LTC) goal of ensuring that our community remains vibrant, resilient, and inclusive. In that spirit, we write to request a **pause** on the decision to cap short-term vacation rentals (STVRs) at 67, and to suggest a collaborative approach that allows for broader consultation and clearer, community-supported solutions.

Hornby Island's economy has long depended on seasonal tourism, which directly and indirectly supports a large portion of our local businesses, tradespeople, artisans, and residents. Reducing visitor accommodation through a significant cut to STVRs—without first securing alternative economic and housing solutions—could have serious unintended consequences. These include the loss of vital income for homeowners, a decline in small business revenues, and an increased strain on an already limited local workforce.

To illustrate the complexities involved, consider the experience of Tofino, a resort municipality that opted into the provincial Principal Residence Requirement in 2024. This decision aimed to balance the benefits of STVRs with the need for long-term housing. However, following extensive community engagement—including town hall meetings, community roundtables, and a petition urging a referendum—the Tofino council chose to reverse their decision in 2025.

To avoid such an outcome, we encourage the LTC to take the following steps during a pause in this process:

1. **Expand Community Engagement**

Many homeowners and stakeholders are working individuals—often off-island—who are unable to attend Friday morning meetings. In 2011, the Trust successfully held evening Community Information Meetings in multiple locations, including Victoria, Vancouver, and Hornby. We suggest a similar approach now to ensure broader participation and a more inclusive decision-making process.

2. **Separate STVR Discussions from Long-Term Housing Needs**

While the housing crisis must be addressed, reducing STVRs does not equate to creating long-term housing. We urge the LTC to move forward swiftly with zoning changes that support housing development, such as allowing secondary suites in appropriately serviced homes within small-lot subdivisions.

3. **Prioritize Workforce Housing Zoning**

The 10-hectare parcel of Crown land identified by HICEEC for workforce housing is ready for rezoning. Advancing this initiative would demonstrate a proactive step toward resolving the island's affordable housing shortage and supporting essential services.

We want to be clear: the community is united in the desire to see meaningful progress on affordable and workforce housing. HICEEC is committed to working alongside the LTC to find balanced, thoughtful, and lasting solutions.

We urge the LTC to focus on actionable strategies that address root issues, rather than reacting to symptoms in a way that may fracture the community or weaken the local economy. By working together—with transparency, care, and respect—we believe we can build the kind of future that Hornby Island deserves.

Thank you again for your service and your attention to these matters.

On behalf of the HICEEC Board,

John Heinegg
Chair, HICEEC