

March 18, 2026

Dear Alex, Grant and Tim,

The Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC) has been following the discussions regarding proposed changes to Vacation Rental bylaws with interest. As the organization responsible for administering the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program and supporting economic development initiatives on Hornby Island, we hope HICEEC's perspective can be considered as these decisions move forward.

The Province has already established a Short-Term Rental Registry, which provides a clear and verifiable record of operators complying with provincial regulations. Those who have registered have demonstrated a willingness to operate transparently and within the law. Using this dataset could provide an objective starting point for understanding the number of responsible short-term rental operators currently serving the island.

The registry also distinguishes between local property owners and non-resident operators through its fee structure, charging **approximately four times as much for non-resident owners**. This provincial dataset therefore offers a practical and fact-based way to assess the number and type of legal operators currently participating in the sector.

Many of these legally operating accommodation providers also participate in the MRDT program administered by HICEEC. **Approximately 60% of MRDT funds collected on Hornby are being directed toward affordable workforce housing initiatives**, and with the support of local accommodation providers the community has already accumulated **over \$250,000 in a reserve fund dedicated to this purpose**.

Reducing the number of legal short-term vacation rentals by 30–35% would therefore have a direct impact on the community's ability to continue building this housing fund and contributing toward solutions for local workers.

It is also important to consider these potential changes alongside other accommodation reductions currently occurring on the island. The number of campsites at Tribune Bay Campground has recently been reduced from approximately 135 to 69 sites. With fewer camping spaces available, families who previously relied on campground accommodation may increasingly look to other forms of lodging.

Recent events also demonstrate the importance of having some accommodation available outside the peak summer season. The Joe King Races last weekend brought marathon runners and visitors to Hornby during the shoulder season. Events such as this — like Conservancy programs, Forest Fest, holiday gatherings, and visiting professionals — would



benefit from having limited accommodation available at certain times of the year. These visitors provide a much-needed influx of business to non-profits, small retailers, restaurants, and other local services during the quieter months when many businesses struggle to remain open.

One option that may be worth considering is a **limited special-event licensing system**, allowing short-term rentals to operate outside the standard permitted season for defined community events or needs. Similar to Special Occasion Licences used in other regulatory systems, this approach could provide flexibility to support community events and the local economy while maintaining the overall regulatory framework.

HICEEC recognizes that balancing housing needs, environmental considerations, and economic vitality is complex. Our intention is simply to highlight the relationship between legally operating accommodation providers and several community priorities — particularly workforce housing — and to ensure that the implications for MRDT-supported initiatives are considered as part of the discussion.

Respectfully,

Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC)