



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 8, 2019

SUBJECT **UPDATE ON RURAL DEFINITION AND WESTERN DIVERSIFICATION**

ISSUE

The unincorporated electoral areas of the Southern Gulf Islands, Juan de Fuca, and Salt Spring Island are within the Capital Regional District but contain communities that are rural by character, geography, population size, and capacity to sustain services. These small communities struggle with economic sustainability and the ability to improve community infrastructure. The electoral areas are excluded from some rural economic development and infrastructure funding programs as a result of being a part of the Capital Regional District (CRD), which is otherwise characterized by mostly urban municipalities.

BACKGROUND

In recognition that rural areas lack the service capacity or base to sustain services, the Federal and Provincial governments have established grant programs, criteria, and policy specifically targeting rural communities. Within British Columbia, the distribution of federal and provincial funding through grant program offers critical support to rural areas and smaller communities. The inclusion of the three electoral areas within the CRD does not provide for regional subsidies or the redistribution of funds to support local services. Further, the *Islands Trust Act*, applicable to the Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Areas, establishes an obligation to preserve and protect the islands and their rural character on behalf of all the people of British Columbia.

The Capital Regional District has requested the BC government classify the electoral areas as rural so that they may qualify and receive the benefits from Provincial and Federal Government rural funding programs.

In 2016, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed a resolution asking the Provincial Government to officially recognize and classify the three CRD electoral areas as rural communities.

On July 11, 2018, the Electoral Areas Committee passed the following relevant resolutions:

That the subject of CRD Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area Broadband Internet Connectivity be deferred until the issue of rural definition can be clarified.

That the Electoral Area Services Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board: That the attached late resolution be submitted to UBCM for consideration at this fall's AGM.

That the Capital Regional District Board write a letter to the Federal Government requesting that the three Electoral Areas be declared as rural for the purposes of economic development funding.

On February 13, 2019, the Electoral Areas Committee passed the following resolution:

That staff explore options to do business with Western Economic Diversification Canada to pursue funding in the Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island Electoral Areas.

On March 13, 2019, the Electoral Areas Committee passed the following resolution:
That the Capital Regional District Board Chair send a letter to MLA Olson to request clarification of the current position of the Province regarding the rural definition and confirm inclusion in the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) program.

A letter dated March 14, 2019 was sent from Chair Plant to MLA Olsen (attached). The MLA's staff confirmed he has received the letter and is committed to working towards resolving the issue.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1:

That the Electoral Areas Committee receive this report for information.

Alternative 2:

That this item be referred back to staff for more information.

DISCUSSION

Western Economic Diversification Canada

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) sponsors Community Futures, a community and economic development program focused on creating jobs outside of major urban centres. Community Futures programs are run by non-profit corporations with volunteer boards of directors, and supported by salaried staff. There is not a Community Futures centre serving the Southern Gulf Islands or Salt Spring Island. The closest WD service centre is the Cowichan Community Futures Office, but the office does not include the Electoral Areas in their stated service area.

On August 2, 2018, the CRD Office of the Board Chair sent a letter to the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development in the House of Commons requesting that, "the three Electoral Areas be declared as "rural" for eligibility for economic development funding."

On August 30, 2018, the office of Minister Bains responded with confirmation that, "the WDP welcomes project proposals from organizations that promote economic growth in response to changing and challenging economic circumstances in their communities. Eligibility is not based on a community's rural or urban classification; rather, proposals are evaluated on the potential for the project to contribute to the community's economic development."

The Salt Spring Island Economic Development Commission Chair has also been advocating for inclusion of the SSI and SGI Electoral Areas in Provincial and Federal funding programs. She requested to present a delegation to the Cowichan Futures board but has so far not been successful.

CRD staff have consulted with staff from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). The following information has been clarified:

- Community Futures is open to applicants from the Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Areas, despite the mapped service boundaries on the Cowichan Community Futures website.

- Community Futures provides loans to entrepreneurs, it is not a granting agency.
- WD's Regional Innovation Ecosystem (RIE) program is geared to assisting small businesses focussed on innovation, clustered business development, and inclusiveness (programs that target underrepresented groups such as women and indigenous youth). WD staff can help applicants understand how to gear their projects towards the WD priorities.
- The WD staff would be pleased to assist entrepreneurs and businesses from the island communities to make applications for funding from the programs they run, including the RIE program.

Province of British Columbia Rural Dividend and Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Province of British Columbia has been requested to make the CRD Electoral Areas permanently eligible for the Rural Dividend Program and to advance an Order in Council recommending cabinet approval to include them in the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET).

The Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) provides funding for economic diversification, planning and regional revitalization in the Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast region. To date, over \$50 million in funding has been approved to support more than 200 projects resulting in total regional investments of more than \$280 million. The Capital Regional District is not included in the Vancouver Island ICET program. A change in legislation is required to enable inclusion.

At the January 9, 2019 Electoral Areas Committee meeting, the EAC received a verbal update from Corporate Administrative Officer (CAO) Lapham which clarified the rural definition issue is a result of restrictive eligibility criteria for individual funding programs and not the result of any general Provincial or Federal legislation classifying the Electoral Areas as urban or rural. In late 2018, the CAO and the Director of the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area attended a meeting with the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, where the Minister committed to advancing the Order in Council to amend provincial legislation and include the CRD Electoral Areas in the ICET program. It is felt that such commitments from the Minister reduce the need for any further request for consideration of this issue by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, if such a resolution would even be accepted for consideration, given UBCM's existing resolution on the same issue. Please see the correspondence attached to this report.

CONCLUSION

Funding for economic development in the CRD Electoral Areas is available on a project by project basis. While the CRD Electoral Areas are currently excluded from the ICET program, the Province of BC has committed to amending legislation to remedy this. The Province has been continuing to include the CRD Electoral Areas in the Rural Dividend program as evidenced in the attached letter from Minister Robinson.

While the SSI and SGI Electoral areas are not included in the mapped catchment area of the Cowichan Community Futures Office, entrepreneurs from these communities are eligible and able to make application for Community Future loans. There are also other programs run by Western Economic Diversification Canada that community businesses and projects from within the Electoral Areas may take advantage of.

It is understood that the economic struggles of the EAs differ and are distinct from those of the CRD's member municipalities, but there is not a general legislative amendment required at the Provincial or Federal levels to change the classification of the CRD Electoral Areas to be "rural." CRD staff can continue to assist the SSI and SGI communities by facilitating Federal and Provincial infrastructure and economic development funding as opportunities arise.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Electoral Areas Committee receive this report for information.

Submitted by:	Justine Starke, Manager, SGI Service Delivery, Corporate Services
Concurrence:	Kristen Morley, JD, General Manager, Corporate Service and Corporate Officer
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

WRITERS INITIALS:js

Attachments: Appendix 1 – Relevant correspondence



Making a difference...together

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July 30, 2020

The Honourable Michele Mungall
Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness
PO BOX 9060, Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Via email: JTT.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Mungall:

RE: INCLUSION OF THE CRD ELECTORAL AREAS IN THE ISLANDS COASTAL ECONOMIC TRUST

The Electoral Area Directors of the Capital Regional District (CRD) are writing to urge your support for inclusion of the CRD Electoral Areas in the Islands Coastal Economic Trust (ICET). As you know, we have been advocating for inclusion in ICET for years as a matter of consistency and fairness. More recently however, the economic impact of the COVID pandemic on many of our constituents has been as serious as on any other jurisdiction within ICET's current area, reinforcing the rationale for access to this important funding source.

MLA Adam Olsen kindly shared the transcript of your discussion of this issue in a recent session of legislative Estimates. We applaud the constructive tone of the discussion and your statement that CRD electoral areas are rural in nature. This is an important acknowledgment. The designation of CRD electoral areas seems to have been an obstacle to our inclusion in ICET.

It is our understanding that the Board of ICET were consulted by your government and has expressed concern about dilution of the fund with inclusion of more participants. This is understandable, but in our view, our constituents have been unfairly precluded from access to ICET funding since its inception over a decade ago. Due to the economic impacts of necessary provincial and federal measures to stop the spread of COVID, we also urge you to renew funding for ICET as part of your proposed COVID Economic Recovery Plan.

Our request is a matter of fairness and economic urgency. If we are truly "all in this together" we hope you will support a consistent treatment of rural areas in the Vancouver Island region, and include refurbishment of ICET funding as part of your proposed Economic Recovery Plan.

Thank you for your leadership during these extraordinary times.

Yours sincerely,

Gary Holman
Salt Spring CRD Director

Dave Howe
Southern Gulf Islands CRD Director

Mike Hicks
Juan de Fuca CRD Director

cc: CRD Board
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD
Adam Olsen, MLA, Saanich North and the Islands



November 13, 2019

File: 0400-20

The Honourable John Horgan, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1
Via email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Horgan:

RE: REQUEST FOR ORDER IN COUNCIL – CRD ELECTORAL AREAS

We are writing to request an Order in Council be advanced to include the Capital Regional District (CRD) Electoral Areas of Salt Spring Island, Southern Gulf Islands and Juan de Fuca in the regions approved for investment by Islands Coastal Economic Trust (ICET).

The Islands Coastal Economic Trust's (ICET) was established in 2006 with a mandate to build a diverse, innovative and sustainable island and coastal economy for British Columbia. Despite being rural, coastal communities, the CRD Electoral Areas have been excluded from the benefits of ICET programs since 2006.

In July of 2018, representatives of the Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island Economic Development Commissions were informed by the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology, (JTT) Office of Economic Partnerships, that inclusion of the CRD Electoral Areas in the ICET program would require a regulatory change with BC Cabinet approval – an Order in Council decision.

The Director of the Office of Economic Partnerships, JTT was asked by the JTT Ministry to move forward with the consultation process regarding this request. This Office arranged for consultation with the ICET Board, the CRD Electoral Area Directors, Islands Trust Trustees and leaders of organizations including VIEA, VICEDA, AVICC and UBCM. These consultations were concluded in November – December 2018. In February of 2019, the JTT Office informed CRD Electoral Area representatives that their Office continued to move forward with preparing a package for Cabinet – and that an exact timeline for presentation to Council had not been set.

In May of 2019, MLA Adam Olsen and the Office of Economic Partnerships, JTT confirmed the consultation process was complete, was satisfactory, and should lead to a positive decision to include the CRD Electoral Areas in the ICET territory. However, to this day no action has been taken by the government to address this inequity.



On October 9, 2019, the Capital Regional District Board passed a resolution to request a timely decision to include the CRD unincorporated Electoral Areas of Salt Spring Island, Southern Gulf Islands and Juan de Fuca in the Islands Coastal Economic Trust Territory.

We look forward to your response and a resolution to this issue that is of primary importance to the residents of the CRD Electoral Areas.

Sincerely,



Gary Holman
Salt Spring Island Electoral
Area Director



Dave Howe
Southern Gulf Islands Electoral
Area Director



Mike Hicks
Juan de Fuca Electoral
Area Director

cc: Francine Carlin, Chair, Salt Spring Island Community Economic Development Commission
Deb Goldman, Chair, Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability
Commission

March 19, 2019

File: 0400-20

Mr. Adam Olsen
MLA Saanich North and the Islands
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4
Via email: adam.olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Dear Mr. Olsen:

RE: CRD ELECTORAL AREAS RURAL STATUS

I am writing on behalf of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board to convey the CRD's request for clarification of the current position of the Provincial government regarding the rural definition for the three CRD Electoral Areas (Juan de Fuca, Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island) as well as confirmation of their inclusion in the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

Please see correspondence related to the request attached.

Sincerely,



Colin Plant
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

Attachment: Correspondence

cc: Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade & Technology
CRD Board
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD

January 4, 2018

File: 0400-50 Premier

Premier John Horgan
West Annex Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Premier Horgan:

RE: DISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL FUNDING THROUGH GRANT PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT RURAL AREAS AND SMALLER COMMUNITIES

Within British Columbia the distribution of Federal and Provincial funding through grant programs is critical to support rural areas and smaller communities. The Federal and Provincial governments have recognized that rural areas lack the service capacity or base to sustain services and have established specific grant programs or grant criteria and policy to enable rural areas to access these funds.

The Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas of the Capital Regional District (CRD) have been wrongfully classified as urban centers due to their inclusion with the CRD. As you know, the decision to exclude these rural districts from rural programs and funding does not reflect their geography, land use or capacity to sustain services. The inclusion of the electoral areas with the CRD does not provide for subsidies or the redistribution of funds to support local services. Further, the Islands Trust Act applicable to the Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas establishes an obligation to preserve and protect the islands and their rural character on behalf of all the people of British Columbia.

The CRD Board has considered this issue and has resolved to request that your government correctly classify the CRD's three electoral areas as rural, so that they may qualify and receive the benefits from Provincial and Federal Government programs that are directed at rural communities.

Currently the CRD's three electoral areas are excluded from the provincially funded Island Coastal Economic Trust (I.C.E.T) and the federally funded Community Futures program. I.C.E.T. alone has contributed over 50 million dollars to coastal communities from Lake Cowichan to Port Hardy and from Gabriola Island to Lund. Every Gulf Island and rural community outside the CRD has been included. Although Nanaimo is considered a rural center, Salt Spring Island, Mayne Island, Pender Island, Port Renfrew, Shirley and Otter Point are considered urban.

In addition to I.C.E.T., programs such as the HST exclusion on rural cottages, BC Rural Dividend grant program and specific grant programs directed at Provincial rural communities have specifically excluded the three electoral areas of the CRD. Community Futures, sponsored by the Federal Government has excluded the three electoral areas because they follow the Provincial classification.



In 2016, UBCM passed a resolution asking the Provincial Government to officially recognize and classify the three CRD electoral areas as rural communities. I would respectfully ask that your government include the Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas in I.C.E.T., include them in all rural programs and grant opportunities and inform the Federal Government of your re-classification so that they may receive the benefits of the Community Futures program.

I understand that you have arranged for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to meet with the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Director, Mike Hicks, to discuss this request and that he has invited the other two electoral area Directors and our CAO to attend. On behalf of the CRD Board we appreciate your quick action to resolve this issue.

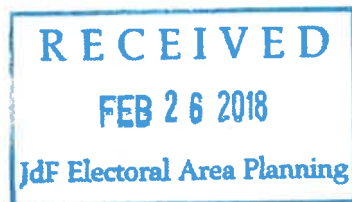
Sincerely,



Steve Price
Board Chair, Capital Regional District

cc: The Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Mike Hicks, Director, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, CRD
David Howe, Director, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area, CRD
Wayne McIntyre, Director, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area, CRD
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD





February 21, 2018

Ref: 231875

Adam Olsen, MLA
Saanich North and the Islands
215 – 2506 Beacon Ave
Sidney BC V8L 4T9

Mike Hicks, Director
Juan de Fuca Electoral Area
Capital Regional District
3-7450 Butler Rd
Sooke BC V9Z 1N1

Dear Mr. Olsen and Director Hicks:

I appreciate your concerns regarding your communities' access to the Rural Dividend, the Island Coastal Communities Economic Trust and Community Futures programs. I also appreciated the opportunity to hear your perspectives respecting how senior government grant programs may exclude your rural communities.

The Rural Dividend Program (RDP) is under the responsibility of my colleague, the Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development. I am pleased that the RDP's goal is to assist small rural communities across British Columbia. Rural is defined as a community with a population of 25,000 or less, located outside the geographic boundaries of Metro Vancouver and the Capital Regional District (CRD). However, I understand that, following an initial request to the program, the RDP has consistently provided exceptions for the communities within the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area and Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area.

Over the three intakes to date, the RDP has funded multiple projects in these areas. I have enclosed a list of approved projects for rural areas of the CRD. I also understand that Minister Donaldson is currently reviewing the Program, and to ensure that he is aware of your views, I will share with him your correspondence and I also encourage you to connect with him directly.

The Island Coastal Communities Trust (ICET) is the responsibility of the Honorable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology. The boundaries of the ICET are defined in legislation and regulation. Any changes would need to consider the views of the Trust Board and other stakeholders. I am pleased to bring your concerns to the attention of Minister Ralston.

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Mr. Olsen and Director Hicks
Page 2

Community Futures is a federal program which promotes socio-economic development across Canada and provides funds to community societies. Please note that societies created to access federal resources under this program umbrella are eligible for provincial Rural Dividend grants as well. I will discuss this issue with Minister Ralston, and suggest that he consider your concerns as he engages with his federal counterpart. I will also send a copy of this letter to the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, to ensure an appreciation for including small rural communities in any future programs.

Provincially, we will also ensure the consideration of small rural communities' eligibility in future grant programs. I look forward to working with both of you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Robinson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Selina Robinson
Minister

Enclosure

Honourable John Horgan, MLA
Langford - Juan De Fuca

The Honourable Navdeep Bains
Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development

Honourable Doug Donaldson
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Honourable Bruce Ralston
Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology

List of Grants Provided to CRD Rural Communities

1. Port Renfrew Tourism Trail
 - Organization: Capital Regional District: Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Parks and Recreation
 - Funding Provided: \$10,000
 - Project Description: This project will include a feasibility study for Port Renfrew Tourism Trail. This trail will link the San Juan River Bridge to the Community Pier at Snuggery Cove, connecting tourists to local businesses.
2. Rural Accelerator
 - Organization: Capital Regional District: Salt Spring Island
 - Funding Provided: \$72,080
 - Project Description: This project will launch a structured program to support local businesses by offering training, mentoring, and access to capital.
3. Pacheedaht Campground Improvement & Expansion
 - Organization: Pacheedaht First Nation
 - Funding Provided: \$100,000
 - Project Description: The project is for improvement and additions to the Pacheedaht "North End" Campground to increase the service and experience offerings for customers.
4. Experience the Gulf Islands – Concept Plan Implementation
 - Organization: Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce & Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Consortium
 - Funding Provided: \$10,000
 - Project Description: This project will support a previously developed tourism strategy by: (1) completing outreach/engagement; (2) developing an inter-island committee and committee coordination for the tourism initiative; (3) secure a formal endorsement of the tourism initiative; and (4) develop an application for a larger project for the Rural Dividend to implement the tourism initiative.
5. Building Pender Islands Economy Through Edu-Tourism
 - Organization: Southern Gulf Islands Community Resource Centre Society
 - Funding Provided: \$77,760
 - Project Description: Project will develop and implement an Edu-Tourism project on the Pender Islands. The project will include Youth and Seniors Advisory Councils.
6. Port Renfrew Tourism Trail – Phase 1
 - Organization: Capital Regional District: Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Parks and Recreation
 - Funding Provided: \$89,194
 - Project Description: This project will fund Phase 1 construction of the Port Renfrew Tourism Trail project. The project will achieve an off-street trail route through the town of Port Renfrew, linking the Community Centre to Beach Camp, the waterfront and a range of tourism attractions and small businesses, with a clear focus on highlighting the recreation and scenic values of the community.

7. Salt Spring Island Farm Centre Program Development

- **Organization:** Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society
- **Funding Provided:** \$100,000
- **Project Description:** This project will support the development of the Salt Spring Island Farm Centre, which will provide future program and services to increase local food production, value-added processing, food education, and consumption of locally grown foods. Project activities include the refinement of business and financial plans, marketing and training.



CLIFF 236033

February 28, 2018

Steve Price
Board Chair, Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria B.C. V8W 2S6

Dear Mr. Price:

Thank you for your letter dated January 4, 2018, regarding the issue of rural classification for the Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring Island, and Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas. I always appreciate the chance to hear from leaders working to improve their communities.

For the purposes of the Rural Dividend program, the B.C. government defines rural communities as those with populations of 25,000 or less outside of the Capital Regional District and Greater Vancouver Regional District.

However, given the unique circumstances of some communities within the geographic boundaries of urban areas, the program has made exceptions to these criteria where appropriate. This is true for the Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring Island, and Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas, as all are considered eligible for Rural Dividend funding.

In the coming months we will be examining opportunities to improve the Rural Dividend as part of a larger initiative to create a new Rural Development Strategy. I would welcome your input into this process, and encourage you to provide your advice on this and other rural development issues by visiting our website www.engage.gov.bc.ca/ruraldevelopment before February 28 at 4 p.m.

In regards to funding opportunities from the Island Coastal Economic Trust and Community Futures, I would encourage you to follow up with those organizations directly, as these entities determine the eligibility requirements of their programs.

Once again thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,

Claudia Trudeau
Director

pc: Premier Office
Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource
Operations and Rural Development

June 19, 2018

File: 0400-20

Honourable Selina Robinson
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Room 310 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Honourable Robinson:

RE: Reclassification of the three CRD Electoral Areas as Rural Communities

Thank you for meeting with Wayne McIntyre, Mike Hicks and Robert Lapham on January 23, 2018 to discuss the reclassification of the three CRD electoral areas as rural communities so that they may qualify and receive the benefits from Provincial and Federal Government programs that are directed at rural communities.

I was advised that the take away from that meeting was that your office would be taking steps to make this change so that the Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring and Gulf Islands electoral areas could be included in the Island Coastal Economic Trust (I.C.E.T.) and any other Provincial or Federal Programs available to rural communities in British Columbia.

It would be appreciated if you could provide an update on any additional measures being taken to include the three CRD electoral areas in I.C.E.T. as well as including them in all rural programs and grant opportunities.

Sincerely,



Steve Price
Board Chair, Capital Regional District

cc: Hon. John Horgan, Premier, MLA Langford-Juan de Fuca
Wayne McIntyre, Director, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area
Mike Hicks, Director, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area
David Howe, Director, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, Capital Regional District





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July 11, 2018

File Number: 0400-30; 4700-20

via e-mail: premier@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable John Horgan
Premier of BC
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Horgan:

Re: Designate Islands Trust Area for Rural Dividend Program Funding

On behalf of the Islands Trust Council I am writing to request that the Province designate all islands in the Islands Trust Area as permanently eligible for Rural Dividend Program funding and other granting programs for rural communities, including the Island Coastal Economic Trust.

It has been a long-standing concern that the Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands electoral areas and Bowen Island have been ineligible for economic development and infrastructure programs intended for rural communities due to their inclusion within the Capital Regional District (CRD) and Metro Vancouver Regional District. The decision to exclude these rural areas from rural programs and funding does not reflect the islands' rural character, geography, land use or capacity to sustain services. Without access to these funding sources, rural island communities find it difficult to sustain community resiliency in the face of social and economic changes and to execute projects that improve community infrastructure.

In 2016, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed a resolution asking the Province to officially recognize and classify the three CRD electoral areas as rural communities. The three CRD electoral areas are now eligible for the Rural Dividend Program and I understand Bowen Island has been granted temporary eligibility. However, they remain ineligible for grants from the Island Coastal Economic Trust. We are requesting that the Province of BC make all islands in the Islands Trust Area permanently eligible for the Rural Dividend Program and the Island Coastal Economic Trust, and any other existing or future granting programs intended for rural communities.

The object of the Islands Trust as set out in the *Islands Trust Act* is to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the trust area and of British Columbia generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.

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The Honourable John Horgan
July 11, 2018
Page 2

We appreciate your consideration of this request. There are many First Nations who have asserted Aboriginal interests in the Trust Area and many who have established harvesting rights. Although we copy First Nations on all correspondence such as this, we have not directly heard their positions on rural funding programs. Given our commitment to establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship with First Nations, we offer the Islands Trust position while being ready to respectfully consider their positions.

Yours sincerely,



Susan Morrison
Acting Chair, Islands Trust Council
smorrison@islandstrust.bc.ca

cc: The Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of
Municipal Affairs and Housing
Islands Trust Area MLAs
Island Coastal Economic Trust Board of Directors
Union of British Columbia Municipalities Executive
Capital Regional District Board
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Cowichan Tribes
Esquimalt First Nation
Halalt First Nation
Homalco First Nation
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group
K'omoks First Nation
Klahoose First Nation
Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lyackson First Nation
Malahat Nation
Musqueam First Nation
Nanwakolas Council
Pauquachin First Nation
Penelakut Tribe

Qualicum First Nation
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
Semiahmoo First Nation
Shíshálh (Sechelt) First Nation
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
Snuneymuxw (Nanaimo) First Nation
Songhees First Nation
Squamish First Nation
Stz'uminus (Chemainus) First Nation
Te'mexw Treaty Association
Tla'amin (Sliammon) First Nation
T'Sou-ke (Sooke) First Nation
Tsartlip First Nation
Tsawout First Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tseil-Waututh (Burrard Inlet) First Nation
Tseycum First Nation
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge First Nation)
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River First Nation)
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website



July 30, 2018

Ref: 238236

His Worship Mayor Steve Price, Chair
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard St
Victoria BC V8W 2S6

Dear Chair Price:

Thank you for your letter of June 19, 2018, regarding the reclassification of the Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring and Gulf Islands Electoral areas as rural communities. I appreciate that the Capital Regional District (CRD) is looking for an update on any additional measures being taken.

The Province of British Columbia is committed to meeting the unique needs of small, rural and remote communities. As such, my meeting with Wayne McIntyre, Mike Hicks and Robert Lapham was a valuable opportunity to hear their perspectives on how senior government grant programs may exclude certain communities. During our meeting, concerns were brought forward regarding their access to the Rural Dividend Program (RDP), the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) and the Community Futures program.

It is important to note that these programs are not under the responsibility of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The RDP is under the responsibility of the Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development. The ICET is under the responsibility of the Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology and is governed by an independent board. And lastly, Community Futures is a federal program which promotes socio-economic development across Canada and provides funds to community societies.

Nevertheless, our discussions remained productive and the Ministry determined that the three rural areas within the CRD, which have been previously considered urban for purposes of eligibility, in fact have all the characteristics of rural areas. I brought this assessment forward to both of my provincial colleagues as well as Minister Ralston's federal counterpart, the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. My Deputy Minister, Jacqueline Dawes, also encouraged her colleagues across government that in the design of any future funding programs, to recognize that these electoral areas have rural development challenges in providing services and developing their economies.

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You may be pleased to know that the RDP was amended and communities within the Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral areas are eligible to apply for funding. On the other hand, the boundaries of the ICET are defined in legislation and regulation. Any changes would need to consider the views of the Trust Board and other stakeholders. I encourage you to contact Minister Ralston if you have not already done so.

As you are likely aware, the Province signed an integrated bilateral agreement with the federal government for the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). The ICIP will provide opportunities for communities to apply for new project funding, a valuable tool which will support long-term economic growth, the advancement of sustainable communities, and continued movement to a low carbon, green economy.

The ICIP includes the Rural and Northern Communities Stream which is dedicated to supporting British Columbia's rural communities and their wide-range of infrastructure priorities. Information regarding this program will be made available later this year. If you have any questions, I encourage you to contact the Local Government Infrastructure and Finance Branch by telephone at: 250 387-4060, or by email at: infra@gov.bc.ca.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,



Selina Robinson
Minister

pc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier
Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations
and Rural Development
Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology
Mike Hicks, Director, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area
Wayne McIntyre, Director, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area
David Howe, Director, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, Capital Regional District



Making a difference...together

Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street, PO Box 1000
Victoria, BC, Canada V8W 2S6

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January 31, 2014

File: 0400-20

Ms Line Robert
Chief Executive Officer
Island Coastal Economic Trust
#201A - 2435 Mansfield Drive
Courtenay, BC, Canada V9N 2M2

Dear Ms. Robert:

**RE: ISLAND COASTAL ECONOMIC TRUST – BOUNDARY EXPANSION TO INCLUDE
CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT**

In August 2013, you were copied on correspondence from the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board Chair, Alastair Bryson, to Minister Coralee Oakes regarding the limitations of the current Island Coastal Economic Trust geographical boundaries on the eligibility of the CRD to receive funding and the resulting challenges faced by the three CRD Electoral Areas. A copy of the correspondence is attached for your information (Attachment A).

On January 3, 2014, the CRD received a response from Minister Shirley Bond (Attachment B) recommending that we approach the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) and prepare a joint recommendation from the CRD and ICET for consideration of Government.

I would like to request a meeting with you in the near future to discuss how best to prepare and move forward with a joint recommendation from the CRD and ICET boards. My Executive Assistant, Treace Alton will be in touch with your office to arrange the details. Alternatively, she may be reached by phone 250-360-3125 or email talton@crd.bc.ca.

I look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss this matter which is of great concern to the electoral areas of the CRD.

Yours truly,



Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment A: August 22, 2013 correspondence from CRD Board Chair to Minister C. Oakes
Attachment B: December 23, 2013 correspondence from Minister S. Bond to CRD Board

cc: Hon. Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible
for Labour
CRD Board of Directors

August 22, 2013

File: 0400-20

The Honourable Coralee Oakes
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
PO Box 9056
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Oakes:

ISLAND COASTAL ECONOMIC TRUST – BOUNDARY EXPANSION TO INCLUDE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

At its meeting held August 14, 2013, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board considered a staff report regarding the limitations of the current Island Coastal Economic Trust geographical boundaries on the eligibility of the CRD to receive funding. The electoral areas located within the CRD, namely Salt Spring Island, Southern Gulf Islands and Juan de Fuca, are a blend of rural and small town centres that have suffered from a loss of resource related industries over the years. Economic Development Commissions have been established by the CRD Board in each of the electoral areas in an effort to preserve and strengthen existing business, attract new business and coordinate local economic development initiatives. The electoral areas rely on grant funding from the Province to help achieve these objectives.

As you are aware, Island Coastal Economic Trust was established by the Provincial government in 2006 to help smaller communities develop their economic strategies, develop the tools to attract economic investment and collaborate with other communities to develop regional economic strategies and marketing initiatives. Unfortunately the geographic boundaries, established by founding legislation, do not include the CRD thereby making the CRD ineligible for funding. The rationale for exclusion of the CRD from the geographical boundaries is unclear with the exception of the CRD being considered a metropolitan area. There are a number of smaller communities within the CRD, including communities that are comparable in size to other communities in the province that are part of the service area for Community Futures British Columbia and are eligible for funding. For example the City of Prince George (est. pop. 76,000) is similar in size to the City of Victoria (est. pop. 80,000) and the City of Kelowna (est. pop. 117,000) is similar in size to the District of Saanich (est. pop. 110,000); both Prince George and Kelowna are eligible for funding.

Ineligibility to obtain funding from major sources such as the Island Coastal Economic Trust results in the electoral areas facing additional challenges to achieve their economic development objectives. As such, the CRD Board adopted a resolution to request the Federal government to make the necessary amendments to expand the boundaries of the Island Coastal Economic Trust to include the CRD.

Our three electoral area directors would also like to request a meeting with representatives from the Province and Island Coastal Economic Trust to discuss the implications of exclusion of the CRD from the geographical boundaries on economic development in this region.

My Executive Assistant, Treace Alton will be in touch with your office to arrange the details. Alternatively, she may be reached by phone 250-360-3125 or email talton@crd.bc.ca.

On behalf of the CRD, thank you for taking the time to consider our request. We look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,



Alastair Bryson
Chair, Capital Regional District Board

cc: Line Robert, Chief Executive Officer, Island Coastal Economic Trust
Mike Hicks, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Director
David Howe, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area Director
Wayne McIntyre, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD
Diana Lokken, General Manager, Corporate Services, CRD
Sonia Santarossa, Manager Legislative Services, CRD

CRD EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Received

JAN 03 2013



☒ Chair *KY* ☐ Board
☒ CAO ☒ Communications
☐ GM
☒ For action / resp. by *Legislative Panel*
☐ Corresp. for Board / Committee meeting
☐ For Information Only
☒ Copies to *FM directors*
CAOO-20

DEC 23 2013

Ref: 100731

Mr. Alastair Bryson, Chair
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street
PO Box 1000
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6

Dear Chair Bryson:

I am in receipt of your letter addressed to my colleague, the Honourable Coralee Oakes, regarding your resolution to include the Capital Regional District (CRD) within the region allocated to the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET). As Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour, I am pleased to respond on behalf of Minister Oakes.

The regional boundaries for ICET are mandated under the regulation accompanying the *North Island Economic Trust Act (2005)*, and fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour.

During these times of fiscal restraint I can understand your desire to have the CRD included within ICET boundaries, and the importance of that inclusion for the smaller and more remote communities within the CRD. At this point in time, I would like to recommend that you approach ICET with this request and together with the backing of the ICET Board, prepare a joint recommendation for the consideration of Government. I will be pleased to receive this joint recommendation and can assure you it will be given full consideration upon receipt.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Shirley Bond
Minister

pc: Honourable Coralee Oakes
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Ministry of Jobs,
Tourism and Skills Training
and Minister Responsible for Labour

Office of the Minister

Mailing Address:
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