

Sustaining Local Climate Action on Salt Spring Island:

A Case for a Three-Year Commitment through the LCC Community Economic Sustainability Service

Prepared by Transition Salt Spring for the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (August 2026)

Background: What four years of public investment have delivered

For four consecutive years, from April 2023 through March 2026, Transition Salt Spring (TSS) received \$14,000 annually through the province's Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP), delivered through the CRD. That funding, roughly \$56,000 in total, covered a modest share, typically 15 to 20 percent, of the total cost of TSS's local climate engagement and communications, with TSS matching the remainder from its own fundraising. In practical terms, LGCAP funding contributed towards extensive Salt Spring focussed community outreach, communications and public engagement on all things community resilience and local climate action.

Over those four years, the reach of that work grew substantially, and TSS reported on it annually to the CRD in the same format we propose using again here:

- Newsletter subscribers grew from 2,300 to 3,000
- Facebook followers grew from 1,300 to 1,800
- Instagram followers grew from 721 to 1,177
- Video production grew from 11 videos a year to 181, with views reaching 188,835 in a single year
- Local newspaper coverage held steady at 38 to 43 articles a year, up from 14 in the first year
- Attendance at educational events nearly tripled, from 1,380 to over 3,700 people a year
- \$152,300 in home energy and water conservation rebates were administered directly to island households

This is not a one-time result. It is a four-year trend, supported by a small, steady CRD contribution matched several times over by TSS's own resources. **That funding has now been cancelled by the province, with no indication it will return.** The current pocket of funding from that source expires in March 2027.

The gap the province has left behind

The work supported by LGCAP funding has not ceased. Wildfire risk, drought, smoke events, and pressure on freshwater and food supplies are ongoing local conditions our community has to manage. **By providing active community engagement on these crucial issues, TSS is building the social capital that the LCC needs to make bold choices on climate.** We are laying the ground for community understanding and acceptance of the big pivots we need to make progress towards greater community preparedness and resilience. TSS is asking the Local Community Commission to continue what LGCAP started, through a three-year funding commitment from the Community Economic Sustainability service.

Why this belongs in Community Economic Sustainability

TSS's core strength is public communications and engagement at a scale and quality few other organisations on Salt Spring can match. Our communications team reaches thousands of islanders directly through print media, social media, and newsletters, work that is more creative and responsive than what local governments can produce under their own communications constraints, and goes well beyond the capacity of most local nonprofits. That reach is what turns climate policy and public safety information into behaviour change: rebate uptake, emergency preparedness, water conservation, local food production and reduced risk of exposure for island households and businesses alike.

This capacity does not operate in isolation, and the record shows exactly how it gets used. When Salt Spring Island Fire and Rescue needed islanders to understand wood smoke reduction for cleaner air, TSS produced and distributed a video series that carried that message to more than 65,000 views, a reach the department could not have generated through its own channels. The CRD's rainwater harvesting rebate programs rely on TSS to reach the households that apply for them, which is how over \$75,000 in rebates have been provided to households in the past four years. The Farmland Trust has partnered with TSS on several initiatives, extending its own reach. The Salt Spring Island Conservancy, the North Salt Spring Waterworks District, Islands Trust, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the School District and dozens of nonprofits all convene under the banner of the TSS-led Climate Action Network, the island's forum for coordinating resilience work across agencies that each have a climate mandate but none of which run a comparable public communications operation. In effect, TSS functions as a shared communications backbone for the island's climate and emergency preparedness efforts, a role none of these other organizations is resourced or positioned to play on its own.

That reach has direct economic weight. Wildfire risk affects property insurance availability and premiums. Smoke season affects tourism revenue and the businesses that depend on it. Drought affects the reliability of water supply for agriculture, hospitality, and food producers, three sectors central to the island's economic capacity. A community that is visibly organized, informed, and prepared is a more attractive place to live, invest, and do business than one that is not, and TSS's communications capacity is a primary reason Salt Spring is able to present itself that way.

Grounded in an existing community mandate

This request is not a new direction for TSS or for the island. The [Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan](#) identifies 250 recommended actions across transportation, emergency services, forest health, and freshwater preservation, developed through extensive community engagement. TSS's programming and communications are one of the primary mechanisms currently advancing that plan on the ground. Continued LCC investment in TSS is, in practical terms, continued investment in a plan the community has already said it wants implemented.

What we are asking for

TSS is requesting that the Local Community Commission establish a three-year funding commitment through the Community Economic Sustainability service, at \$14,560 in the first year (a 4 percent increase over the previous \$14,000 annual LGCAP contribution) rising by a further 4 percent each year to \$15,142 in year two and \$15,749 in year three. This totals approximately \$45,450 over three years.

We recognize this does not fit the standard Contribution Projects mechanism, which the service's own guidelines reserve for time-limited, seasonal promotion activity. We are instead asking the Commission to consider establishing this as a dedicated, ongoing supplementary item within the CES budget, the same mechanism already under discussion for the service's 2027 reserve and project-cost increases.

TSS will report to the Commission annually, in the same format already used for our LGCAP reporting to the CRD: a summary of communications reach, event attendance, and program outcomes for the preceding year. This gives the Commission a familiar, proven accountability structure, and gives TSS the funding stability needed to retain program capacity and plan beyond a single budget cycle, something a single annual grant application cannot provide.

The choice in front of the Commission

Without a funding base, TSS's capacity to deliver this programming will shrink, not because the need has gone away, but because the provincial funding that supported it has. The costs of wildfire, drought, and water and food scarcity to this island's economy will not wait for a replacement funding source to be found. A three-year commitment would let the LCC address this at the scale the island actually needs, continuing a track record of public investment that has already been demonstrated to work.