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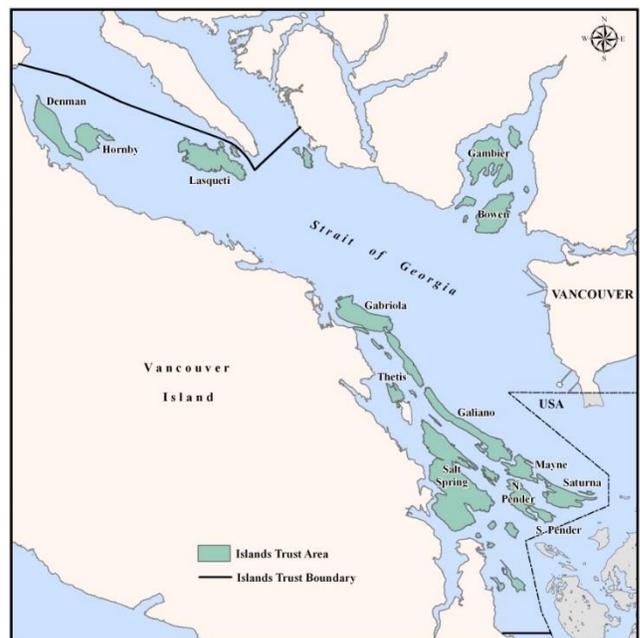
Via e-filing: tc.portsreview-examendesports.tc@tc.gc.ca

Transport Canada
Let's talk Ocean Protection Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Transport Canada's Port Modernization Review Discussion Paper

The Islands Trust is a federation of local government bodies representing 26,000 people living within the Islands Trust Area and approximately 10,000 non-resident property owners. The Islands Trust is responsible for preserving and protecting the unique environment and amenities of the Islands Trust Area through planning and regulating land use, development management, education, cooperation with other agencies, and land conservation. The area covers the islands and waters between the British Columbia mainland and southern Vancouver Island. It includes 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands covering 5200 square kilometres.



Since 1979, in support of its mandate to 'preserve and protect' the Islands Trust Area, the Islands Trust Council has advocated for regulatory changes that will improve the health of marine ecosystems in the region. Trust Council's current advocacy on marine issues is supported by the [Islands Trust Policy Statement](#), approved by the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs in 1994.

The Islands Trust Area is home to an extraordinary diversity of marine life and is among the most productive marine ecosystems in the world. Life is busy and colourful above and beneath the waves. The Salish Sea's marine waters support diverse species such as bald eagles, oystercatchers, loons, cormorants, grebes, gulls and ducks, anemones, sea urchins, sand dollars, crabs, sea stars, octopus, seals, river otters, whales, porpoises and sea lions - to name but a few of the 2000 species. Not only do marine resources support local economies and diets; they are an ongoing source of wonder. The area is critical to the survival of southern resident killer whales, humpback and gray whales, and is critical habitat for salmon, rockfish, and herring. This area has been home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. Despite efforts by local communities to reduce environmental footprints on the marine environment and land base we see the impacts of climate change and habitat loss deepen continuously as each year passes.

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The Discussion Paper regarding the Ports Modernization Review explains that the 1995 National Marine Policy which underpinned the creation of today's port system included key principles that put emphasis on accountability to users and the public, business discipline, and self-sufficiency. Generally, people living within the Salish Sea feel that Port Authorities lack accountability and business discipline. When I speak with members of the public and First Nations they express concerns related to cumulative effects of freighters, tankers, and marine shipping in general; they express concerns related to responsiveness of Port Authorities to community-requested interim measures and protocols that seek to address concerns about anchorages within the Salish Sea; and they express concern related to modern spill and emergency response and environmental monitoring.

The Discussion Paper states that Ports will need to create and maintain community partnerships, and that some Indigenous groups and municipalities have expressed a desire for ports to respond better to their concerns and to be more involved in decision-making activities that affect their interests and quality of life. We feel this is an important point. While we understand the National Interest in the need for shipping and how it is seen to support a healthy economy, we also see the marine industry expansion evolving to address resource extraction, trade, and Canadian economy without an equivalent change in how the industry addresses impacts to local communities, environmental protection and climate change, safety and security, and reconciliation. In this time of digital connectivity, we see methodology that is not responsive to protocols to dim anchorage lights at anchor, to disseminate information in a meaningful way to community, and we see a lack of accountability for supply chain logistics.

What does this mean for the Islands Trust communities? It means people face fear and concern about the future of the Salish Sea; they face frustration regarding concerns related to anchorage in sensitive ecosystems and in upland rural locations with anchorages nearby; they face concerns regarding habitat degradation and loss due to anchorages within sensitive ecosystems; and they worry about threats to species at risk such as the resident orcas, and humpback and grey whales.

Transport Canada can influence the creation of systems that recognize the necessity for greener, low-carbon transportations systems; for sustainable development practices and world class response and monitoring. But in order to do this, we all must meet the challenge of working together to understand each other and have meaningful dialogue to create a liveable community a sustainable economy; not only for humans but for the environment. The Islands Trust area is a sensitive eco-system that has been recognized since the 1970s. Long before the *Islands Trust Act*, this area was home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. As a community, we have tried to live within the understanding of reducing the environmental footprint on the marine and land base. However, we see the impacts of climate change and habitat loss to marine and land environments continuously as each year passes. At this time I know of no climate impact study that addresses the cumulative effects of increased tanker traffic within the Salish Sea; or cumulative studies that review the human and environmental health effects of tankers at anchor within the Salish Sea. Modernization means building better systems, having greater understanding, and learning from mistakes of the past. Modernization also means understanding how to address and being able to meet the risks associated with a project or proposal. At this time, Ports have the ability to serve as environmental stewards, to better protect our environment, and to create efficient trade and transportation corridors that can be judged as global leaders in management systems. Transport Canada can leverage this ability into meaningful actions.

When Transport Canada looks at how to modernize Canada's Port system it must evaluate the current governance models and approaches. We hope there will be a realization that together we must co-create tools and communication methods that are responsive and transparent to the concerns of communities. Transport Canada must support Port Authorities and their clients in doing a better job of forecasting supply changes and upholding best practices to ensure that communities are not bearing the brunt of delays in shipping with increased anchorage times and vessels staging within the Salish Sea. It is unacceptable that ships are waiting weeks and months in the Salish Sea to complete shipments or to pick up shipments. It is critical that the impacts associated with Ports having insufficient capacity for the commitments of shippers to move product is understood and that measures are taken to eliminate the inappropriate use of the Salish Sea, a national treasure for a "for profit" use at the expense of the natural environment, the habitat of humans and wildlife. As an example, there is a need for Ports to consider the necessity of ships maintenance while at anchor outside Port boundaries and examine the cumulative impacts of this industrial activity on the environment and on the character of the Gulf Islands, which is primarily a residential /recreational place; not a shipyard.

We hope Transport Canada will promote changes that see world class monitoring that is inclusive of community and Indigenous knowledge; and world class response to emergencies that is reflective of the unique threats and risks to the Salish Sea.

We must insist on being global leaders in the protection of marine species and species at risk; as well as global leaders in the protection of marine habitat. The Salish Sea and its marine habitat sustain the very essence of the ecological, cultural, and spiritual health and relationships of the people of this region. The environmental liability that is being placed in trust to the Canada Port Authorities is an oversight role that cannot be minimized. The Salish Sea is the heart of the salmon, and the whale, and the beauty of this region and I cannot emphasize more how important it is to protect and steward this area now and into the future.

As mentioned in the Discussion Paper, the shipping industry is ordering new, larger container ships to realize economies of scale. We believe there is insufficient emergency capacity with respect to towing tugs of opportunity in the Salish Sea region with the necessary bollard pull capability, the necessary equipment, and properly trained crews ready to respond at a moment's notice in poor weather and heavy seas. There is a need for Port Authorities, shippers, and/or Transport Canada to support a standby rescue tug located in Sidney, British Columbia and available to Turn Point, off Stuart Island.

In this region, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority and the Nanaimo Port Authority are critical partners in the protection and stewardship of the Salish Sea. I look forward, along with the Islands Trust Council, to working with Transport Canada to create environmentally sustainable transportation systems and governance models that reflect the needs and concerns of the Islands Trust communities and which reflect the sensitivity of the ecosystem and the marine species that call the Salish Sea home.

The protection of the Trust Area, in the Salish Sea is also “in the National Interest”. Thank you for inviting comment.

Sincerely,



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cc: Islands Trust Area MPs
BC Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
BOŶĒĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation
Cowichan Tribes
Halalt First Nation
Homalco First Nation
Klahoose First Nation
K'ómoks First Nation
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lekwungen (Songhees) Nation
Lyackson First Nation
MÁLEXEĒ (Malahat) Nation
Penelakut Tribe
Qualicum First Nation
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation
shíshálh First Nation
Snuneymuxw First Nation
Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
SŶÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation
Stz'uminus First Nation
SXIMEĒĒĒ (Esquimalt) Nation
Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tseil-Waututh Nation
T'Sou-ke Nation
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) First Nation
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation
WŶJOĒĒĒP (Tsartlip) First Nation
WŶSIŶĒEM (Tseycum) First Nation
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San Juan County Council
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Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website