

**Islands Trust Proposed 2011-2012 Budget
Comments Received from the Public Up to Noon February 11, 2011
For distribution to FPC for meeting on February 16, 2011**

Note: these 73 comments were received primarily by email. Where a handwritten comment was sent in, the comment was typed and added to this list. All personal information (eg. address, email address, phone number, etc) was removed. Where the commenter's island was known, it was added. Greetings and salutations were removed to save space in this document. The titles next to the comment number are mainly the email subject heading, and capitalization and spelling have been retained as received. The comments are organized in four categories:

1. In Favour of the Budget
2. Opposed to the Budget
3. In Favour of the Trustee Remuneration Proposal
4. Opposed to the Trustee Remuneration Proposal

- the numbering reference starts at "1" at the beginning of each section. In general, comments with lower numbers were received before comments with higher numbers.

IN FAVOUR OF THE BUDGET

1. Approve budget

I very much support the 2011 Budget. The raise in salary for the Trustees is long overdue and the additional funds to plan for climate change are also essential services. Thanks for your thoughtful and timely Budget.

Briony Penn, Saltspring Island

2. Trust Budget comments

I want to express my support for the increase in remuneration for Trustees proposed for the upcoming budget. This is important to have trustees of various ages and income levels.

Maxine Leichter, Salt Spring Island.

3. I support the budget!

I particularly support the increased salaries for Trustees.

Maureen Moore, Salt Spring Island

4. Proposed budget

I have looked over the draft budget material and consider it to be well presented and quite informative.

On behalf of my wife and myself we wish to go on record in support of it. In particular, we feel that the proposed remuneration is fully justified, especially considering the amount of negative criticism that has become more commonplace of late. We recognize that being a trustee involves a great deal of time and energy commitment, and it ought not have to be simply a charitable donation.

Harold and Gladys Page, Salt Spring

5. Support for the proposed budget

I am writing in support of the proposed budget and, more specifically, in support of the increased salaries for Trustees.

Many of us on Salt Spring have long felt embarrassed at the astonishingly low level of remuneration afforded our trustees. Even the proposed increases will be modest salaries given the requisite time commitments and governance responsibilities. But, at least, the proposed level of remuneration would broaden opportunities for more residents to run for these leadership positions.

I urge you to pass this budget.

Sharon McCollough, Salt Spring

6. Letter of support

We are happy to support the increase in taxes outlined in your report. It is crucial to the well being of our community that the planners and Trustees are given adequate tools to do their work.

Further, if we are to attract high calibre applications for future trustees, a massive pay increase is in order. As it stands, this full time job can only be taken on by those in a position to subsidize their income out of their own pocket. This must change. A livable salary is crucial in off-setting the notion that younger people are cut out of the process and reserved for the mythic 'wealthy retirees' only. The present remuneration reflects the provincial poverty line and ignores the fact this is a very complex and full time job. We would advocate for the fullest amount possible to reflect the importance of these positions, positions created by the province to carry the load on their behalf.

Sam & Ruth Tarasoff, Salt Spring Island

OPPOSED TO THE BUDGET

1. Budget suggestions

Thanks for bringing this to my attention (*see below for reference*). The newspaper I was reading must have been behind in their reporting. Still \$16,000 is not \$30,000 and the mayor's salary is probably higher making alderpersons with far greater responsibilities than Trustees with much less than what has been proposed.

I just think the cost of governing is far too high from a planning perspective and is reaching beyond the ability of many to pay. Read the economist and you will see that we are dividing people into the very rich and the increasingly poor. High fees (i.e. for zoning, DP's etc.) and red tape add to costs and become barriers to entry. Far more of a fuss should be made on behalf of the people of Salt Spring by the Trust to have the Government pay it's 50% of budget as it used to do!! The Trust Act is supposedly for the benefit of people of BC and Islanders equally. A big campaign for matching funds should be instituted by the Trust bureaucracy. That would gain public support!

I think the Trust needs to become more a part of the Community and that continual increases in costs even during recessionary times when the populous is supposed to be increasing savings is not the time to increase the cost of government.

I do thank you for pointing out what appears to be an inaccuracy though. However, I think the Trust feeling that business and homeowners can pay outrageous fees is counterproductive to our community and the environment. To allow subdivision and then not allow services to keep up means more people use more carbon and inconvenience travelling off-Island resulting in less money here circulating. Furthermore, we have one of the oldest populations in BC and given density provisions there is

zero accommodation for the fastest growing population group...the very old. Nor is there any handicapped accommodation for the 8% of people who find themselves in that predicament. Thus those that need their friends, neighbours and relatives must move off the Island. There is so much dedicated work to do that I cannot see anyone wanting to be paid for what should be a great dedication of service to the community by Trustees.

At least, leave the increases for better economic times should such ever occur again.

Allen Cunningham

----- Original Message -----

Subject: RE: Budget suggestions

Hello Mr. Cunningham...I'm just checking on your statement that Comox alderpersons receive a stipend of \$1,000 per year. I looked at the 2010 five year plan on the Town of Comox website. For the six councillors the 2011 salary and benefits budget is noted as \$98,939 which works out to \$16,490 each. Can you clarify?

Thanks,

Craig Elder, Director of Administrative Services

Subject: Budget suggestions

It is laudable to have a list of objectives and programmes. However, I think the taxpayers expect **all** governments to trim their spending during a recession. I would think that disassociating a seemingly representative organization from the economic times in which it lives is not conducive to gaining support in its yearning to be part of the community it serves. It is that simple.

Remuneration of Trustees may be a long-term positive goal but this is the wrong time to institute such a programme. Especially when one realizes that a place like Comox with six times the population of Salt Spring pays a \$1000 stipend to its alderpersons per year. Furthermore, they have weekly instead of monthly meetings. I think anyone truly dedicated and with the ability to represent the public should be able to dedicate part of their lives to something that interests them as a volunteer of time and effortand to do so with passion.

Without a healthy economy there is not much that can be accomplished in a realistic way when it comes to protection and preservation. Programmes require money but when health and education are challenged then the second order expenditures should be modified. This does not mean that leadership, study, action and goals can still not be developed.

There are not unlimited public funds available in a world of increasingly scarce resources. It is apparent that we are going to have to share such limited resources even more in a world of accelerating population growth. The needs for preservation and protection in such a milieu may increase but such goals may have to be accomplished in a more cost effective manner. That itself is an exercise in efficiency and improved productivity.

I hope the Trust considers emphasizing efficiency for the moment instead of higher taxes and fees.. Should there be a good argument that counters such then I would like to read such.

We should not press on to become the most expensive per capita planning organization in the world.

Good luck in your deliberations. I hope temporary efficiency is considered. that match the ability to pay. The fact that we may have more homeless than any other small population area does not indicate to me that lavish spending is yet in order.. Please prove me wrong so that I can agree with your direction.

Allen Cunningham

2. comment

Since you have asked for budget comments, here's mine:

The Islands Trust budget has grown and grown and grown over the last 15 years. I have looked back to the mid 90's when you were criticized for a budget of nearly \$2 million!

However, as a government agency that is funded by local taxation, you will always find ways to justify increases. Nothing us little taxpayers can do to really change that, is there?

Your current spin/news release subtracts out the surprise revenue in order to get the magnitude of increase down to 4.4 percent. Even so, this is more than twice the inflation rate and there are no changes to services. It would be more honest to show the actual magnitude of the increased budget, notwithstanding one time revenue off-sets.

My own perspective is that the Islands Trust needs to set a goal of a capped budget. To expand your budget every year, eventually you will run into a wall of angst. Why push to that point?

Ken Youds, Thetis Island

3. Unacceptable deadline for Comments on 2011 Budget (and opposition to 2011 budget increases)

I saw a notice regarding your 2011 Budget on 27 January 2011. This was on the back page of the Island Tides in a relatively obscure position. I could easily have missed it (and so could everyone else). Then I notice you will be accepting comments and public input only until Noon, Friday 11th February 2011 (although your decision meeting is not until 8th March 2011).

I find this UNACCEPTABLE, for it does NOT give the public (taxpayers, who are indeed your Principals, lest you forget) time to properly consider and respond to this proposed budget increase. (Yet another increase well above inflation).

Why not have set a deadline of the END of February 2011, or indeed the Friday 4th March? I can only guess it's because you don't want to get too many challenges to your budget, which I'd hate to think has perhaps been already pre-decided?

It's really no wonder why I sense a steadily developing, tumultuous undercurrent of discontent amongst those who you claim to serve. Sometimes there is a need for austerity and a reduction of spending habits. This is one of those times. So was last year. And next year too... The fact that your provincial grants are declining is a clear sign to cut back the Trust's operations, not simply increase your budget and turn to the taxpayer for the difference.

Expect a further letter when I have considered my objections further. In the meantime, I'd encourage you to extend the public input deadline to allow sufficient time for full feedback and democratic process.

Mike Aston, Pender Island

4. residents

I am seeing and hearing more and more discontent with the Island Trust and many people saying that it is time to eliminate the Islands trust as they feel the cost to the tax payers is becoming unreasonable.

Dave Sherman, North Pender Island

5. Islands Trust Budget 2011

I am away from home and just became aware of this budget review process. I am not able to review the details of the budget increases but I feel very strongly that any increase is unacceptable in these times. Please don't push it too far there is too much talking about Islands Trust that is negative and you may just push the public too far. You currently have an extremely unique government position as Islands Trust that should not be taking advantage of public funds.

Diane Logan

6. Comment on proposed 2011 Budget

Like most property owners on Pender, I strongly prefer that local government control their activity and expenditures such that costs do not increase annually more than the published rate of inflation for Canada. Many of us on Pender are retired or have limited income due to the nature of an island community vs. the big city and larger venue for employment. Please review the need for ever expanding local government and increasing "services" and instead, strive to implement a budget that is equal to the current 2009-2010 amounts. These should be more than adequate to provide for the core responsibilities of the Islands Trust. This is not a financial time for extras with the recession barely or perhaps not even behind us.

Ron & Susan Underhill, Pender Island

7. FEEDBACK

We would like to begin by acknowledging the work, effort and commitment of the Islands Trust, our Local Trust, as well as Ms. Courtney Campbell, Island Planner.

The feedback given will include areas specific to the Islands Trust proposed budget, as well opinions concerning the role and functioning of the Islands Trust organization.

Budget Input: The I.T. budget has become excessive. The Trust must look at ways and means of operating more efficiently. That is an expectation of all government, local and public offices and departments. There must be ways that you as a group of creative, intelligent and committed staff can "lessen" the financial load that ultimately falls on the shoulder's of Island resident's.

In real terms, we need to know, see and feel what we are receiving for these heavy costs.

There is an expectation of representing all Islanders, not in just the areas of "preserving and protecting", but also in areas of responsible management of resources, both our natural resources and the financial ones you need to manage. There are already duplications, redundancies between the CVRD and Island's Trust. This represents inefficient over management.

Opinions, Other Areas: Over thirty years ago a wonderful idea was born, supported and brought to fruition. The concepts, vision and philosophy behind that vision served as a proactive model. Unfortunately, like many great progressive concepts something happened. The "organization" is suffering from that "baurcratic syndrome" that leads to de-railing its functioning. The system gets "stuck" so to speak in its own overbearing mechanisms and can not move progressively, creatively forward.

Examples: The outdated manner in which the I.T. Business Meetings are conducted. Residents are given the "privilege" of being seated and "observing" the "business of business" taking place, without any or little interaction. In this day and age, that method of "conducting business is absurd and demeaning to property owners, residents and tax payers.

The rationale of; “These are business meetings and the guidelines are such”, hold no credibility. If you had open, ongoing dialogue, you would conceivably head off problems down the road, especially on what are at times potentially sensitive issues.

Openness = Education = Communication = Strengthening of the Democratic Process = a Strong Healthy Community, ultimately a strong supported organization

The same criticisms can be leveled at the ACP/OCP process, of which I served on and chaired for one year. Though some of us wanted, encouraged open community dialogue, we were discouraged from that because; “The guidelines prevent open communication with community at ACP business meetings”. That attitude is only good to strengthen the “status-quo”, and adds to hindering credibility, progress and truly representing various view points.

Potential for Building Frustration: What appears as minor rumblings, complaints, dissatisfaction will grow if the attitude is; “If we do not acknowledge anger, it will go away”. That attitude leads to backlashes. Many individuals are frustrated with the usual non committal political and bureaucratic responses, and no decisions or action.

Examples: Few meaningful decisions are made, especially with regards to input from residents and property owners. Surveys can be sent out and received with opinions stated, and the expected actions are not realized. There are issues with redundant (and) too many By-Laws. There is frustration with the perception of being doubly penalized in the form of taxation with little in return. There is the perception of a burdensome, heavily weighted bureaucracy that does little except represent something abstract from long ago.

Our point is that in order to “survive” as a meaningful, needed, functioning organization, a political group, a government department, or business; it must grow with the times. People, must feel and understand and believe the organization serves a real progressive and valuable service.

Steve and Myla Frankel, Thetis Island

8. Opposition to Islands Trust Tax increases and increased 2011 budget

Again you are wanting to push through a tax increase above Statistics Canada’s CPI inflation rate (which was 2.3% in 2010). Your proposed 4.4% tax increase for 2011 is on top of a 4.7% rise in 2010 and rises averaging 3.5% over the previous couple of years, (estimated from figures I can find).

You appear to be taking the Islands Trust on an out-of-control spending spree, wanting everything NOW (however unaffordable), rather than waiting until you have sufficient funds, and only then selecting just the highest priority initiatives you wish to run on the taxpayers’ account. Unfortunately I, like many other islanders, am not seeing my earnings increase by the rates you are wanting to increase my taxes by. In fact my income has actually decreased again year on year (for the 4th consecutive year), with my disposable income being inversely proportional to your tax hikes. Regretfully, I am not alone. This island economy and the livelihoods and wages of many who live here are struggling with the economic slowdown. Your increasing spending and property tax appetite is, by its very nature, harming the very fragile island communities you seem so blindly eager to “preserve and protect” at any cost. Unfortunately many of your policies and rules appear to have been ill conceived, poorly researched and many are just not really high priority, seeming merely to keep the Trust and its staff busy and paid. There is a growing and tumultuous undercurrent of discontent because of Island Trust policies, partly because many think that the role of protecting the Islands has been largely achieved already and that the Islands Trust should be wound down to a tick-over role, not ramped up.

For once, I’d like to see those in politics, including you, the 4th level of bureaucracy, which the Islands Trust is in our area, stand up and say “NO, we are not going to raise taxes this year” (or at least certainly not by any more than inflation). This increased spending is simply NOT sustainable. Instead, I’d like to see someone with the courage to say: “We will keep our 2011 budget the same as last year (or even lower it to help taxpayers) and

make the most of what we have". This will mean that difficult choices need to be made. But make them you must! Unfortunately, this might mean that some programs or new jobs simply will not have the funding to move forward. Indeed some existing jobs and schemes may need to be lost or hours scaled back. That's life.

You must realise that, even as government, you cannot have it all. If you have spent up what you had, with nothing in reserve, then sorry but it's time to tighten your belts. Taxpayers do not have bottomless pockets for you to keep dipping into.

As regards big (or any) remuneration increases for trustees, that is another issue I disagree with, at least if they are anything beyond the level of inflation. The claim that bigger salaries attracts better candidates is nonsense. You only have to look at bank bonuses and CEO salaries in the private sector to prove that already. (This, in many cases, amounts to little more than theft from shareholders). If you claim that a bigger salary should be offered for excellence, then think again. I see precious little evidence of excellence in politics at any level: I see too many lies, too much red tape, too much spending on the system itself, with only a small fraction of taxes actually creating any tangible benefit, and a lot of people who simply don't listen to those they claim to represent. So in my opinion, hiring consultants to tell you that you should have pay rises above inflation, and then voting for your own pay rise based on your paid-for report, amounts to "theft from the taxpayer".

Rather, the expectations of trustees should be less. Keep salaries the same (or inflation-linked only). Make the positions strictly part time and stress this. But you will need to start by reducing the complexity the Islands Trust has created over the years with its expanding empire and increasingly fatter OCPs and other low priority agendas. Make life less bureaucratic, with fewer trivial rules, costs and hurdles for the people who live under the Islands Trust. With only around 25,000 people in the Trust area, the burden of your significant level of bureaucracy and cost base is financially very troubling.

If trustees want bigger salaries, then they should go find a different job. If, however, they want a vocation and to work part time for the benefit of their local community, then be a trustee. But do it for the passion, not for financial rewards.

Last year I read with interest a Trust press release indicating that the Islands Trust had nominated itself for some local government-type "excellence award" for handling so many OCP amendments in a short space of time. Good for you – but wasn't that your job? (although there wouldn't have been the need for the work at all, if you'd only left things as they already were, which most would have thought was already quite adequate). Most people work tirelessly at their jobs elsewhere, without expecting praise or the need for self-glorification. Of course it's always nice when praise results from doing a good job, but you shouldn't need to ask for it! I would be interested to know how much public time and money went into that nomination. Taxpayer-funded time and energy should be thoughtfully spent and never wasted.

An immediate cost saving suggestion is to get rid of the third trustee at LTC meetings (the Chair). Clearly there is need for a consensus if 2 trustees have opposing views. But why not ask the attendees to vote instead, if there is stalemate. This would be rather democratic and would save a lot of travel and time expenses. The 2 Trustees could then run their own meeting with input from the floor, as necessary. When the 2 trustees cannot decide, Islanders get to vote. This should not absolve Trustees from the need to listen to their electorate, however. Islanders would like to be heard properly and have their views count. If it's a big issue then you can guarantee there will be a lot of public interest, a big turnout and the chance of some democracy in action.

Anyway back to your budget... Eventually, if Islands Trust tax hikes continually exceed inflation, islanders will have an ever-decreasing, perhaps negative income to live on and, unless they are exceptionally well-heeled, will simply not be able to afford to live in the Trust area. Shame. Will the Trust take responsibility for this? Perhaps it should, although it would be unfair for the taxpayer to pay for mistakes. Who will staff the shops, the small struggling businesses, clean windows, do yard work and so on? The more initiatives the Trust takes on, the more our taxes go up, the less affordable it will be to live here. The problem exacerbates itself. Unfortunately, all levels of government seem to be creating the same effect. Overspending and continually

increasing the burden for taxpayers could surely be regarded as negligent? In my opinion, it is downright criminal.

So, I respectfully request that the Trust does NOT increase its budget or trustees remuneration beyond for 2011 or thereafter.

Furthermore I would encourage that the Trust thinks long and hard before every initiative it brings in: "Does this really benefit the communities we are mandated to Preserve and Protect?" "Is this what the majority of Islanders want?" "Or does it simply benefit the Islands Trust, its members or a minority (but active) support lobby"?

Mike Aston, Pender Island

9. proposed budget 2011-12

I am making this submission as a taxpayer and resident on North Pender Island. In my opinion it would be good policy for the Trustees to exercise maximum restraint in the preparation of this budget in order to reduce the tax demands on all of us as much as possible during the coming year; there are multiple demands from different levels of government, but only one taxpayer. Perhaps those Trustees who are already in receipt of an adequate retirement pension might consider refraining from drawing their honorarium from the Trust, also I see that both the Trust and the CRD have separate offices on Pender Islands, surely a single office would be adequate for both agencies.

Edward Taylor, Pender Island

10. My Opposition to Islands Trust Tax increases and increased 2011 budget

I run a small business on Pender Island where I work very closely with several other small business owners.

In 2010 / 2011 I have seen a decline in business on Pender Island, (and on other Gulf Islands), and I am seeing a lot of small businesses struggling with the way the current economy is going.

I have not been able to impose even a small increase over the last couple of years, to my hourly rate as I understand the tough time some of these businesses are going through.

The Island has a very fragile economy at the moment, indeed it has been for quite some time, and lots of the business community rely on the business we all give each other. I am going to have to be more resourceful in 2011 to be able to sustain a living on Pender Island in the future, and I am even contemplating whether we can still afford to live here with the existing increased costs.

Please take my vote as a strong 'NO' to any Island Trust Tax increases and an Increased 2011/2012 budget. Instead please use your existing more than generous 2010 budget, (or preferably an even lower amount), more sensibly and on what's important.

Donna Aston, Pender Island

11. Denman Island budget

After reading the Feb 2011 Flagstone I find myself upset at what has been written. A budget of nearly 7 million dollars which includes an increase of 470,000 dollars which will raise my property taxes an additional 4.4%. As far as I see and hear on this island too many people in committees, groups etc. are helping themselves to the landowners money. To make matters worse some think they should get a substantial raise in pay. One day we read someone has volunteered for some work, shortly he or she is on the payroll. Some of these committees also seem to eventually get tax funded. This not acceptable. I do not have a problem with paying my fair share,

but I do expect everyone else to be forced to do the same. Too many people on these islands getting a free ride. People who are not contributing to the taxes should not have any say on how the money is spent. That will take care of these property tax increases. We are grossly over taxed. VIRT?- The library that we have is just fine. The wharf?- Many people oppose one because they all know it will be used by non payers. Community hall- a must. No rental freebies. Fire Department and Ambulance - We all benefit -they are great. In small communities like Denman Island many residents spend endless hours volunteering , thats what keeps ideas and projects going, They are to be complimented . Providing my input!

R.Granger, Denman Island

12. holding even - budget 2011

We live on Salt Spring Island and are responding to the Islands Trust's invitation to comment upon the 2011 budget.

We strongly object to any percentage increase in the property taxes be for Islands Trust or for any other department.

Governance in North America at all levels - federal, provincial, and municipal - are experiencing financial challenges. Many of these public jurisdictions are verging on bankruptcy. The private sector has seen revenues fall dramatically, and the incomes of many individuals have tumbled.

We're certain that all the programs, activities, and salaries of the Islands Trust are deserving; however, at this time, any increase is a luxury that should be denied. And such an action would set an example to governing bodies elsewhere in the province and country.

It is time that our government take leadership in at least holding the line on expenditures. We support a ZERO percentage increase in the Islands Trust 2011 budget.

Pat and Rosemarie Keough, Salt Spring

13. Budget 2011 Comments

I am distressed at the continuation of a years long pattern of budget increases well in excess of inflation. The Trust expenditure budget has increased a total of 76% over the last ten years, a period in which general inflation has been a cumulative 21%. In nine of the ten years, Trust expenditures exceeded inflation, often by a large margin. While the most egregious increases predate the term of this Trust Council, even the last three years show expenditure increases of 12% when inflation has been less than 5% in total. You don't get much credit in my books for starting from an already bloated base and continuing to spend money at rates above CPI.

My annual expenditures have not increased 5% over the last three years, never mind 12%. My income doesn't allow it. Consequently, I resent having to pay increasing fractions of a flat (sometimes falling in real terms) income to an entity with no apparent control of its own expenditures. Times are tough. Even our own Trustees say times are tough. Everyone has had to take in their belt a notch or two. You should try it too.

I am not singling you out. On Salt Spring, the fire district's expenditure growth outpaces yours by far. (I sent them a letter too.) With the water problems we're having, we face higher bills for water in the not so distant future (and some local water districts have already seen huge increases). Their problems are not yours, however. Your remit is land use planning and how to pay for it. You deal with this every day, so I hardly match your expertise, but here are some of the things I noticed after looking through the documents on your website and doing a little calculating. In some cases I had to make assumptions because detail is lacking.

Your general administration budget is through the roof. I find \$1.4 million astonishing. I looked for an explanation in the 2009/10 Financial Information Act report that Craig Elder sent me. Because it's laid out differently, I can't reconcile anything with that \$1.4MM figure, but let me give some of the bigger items that look like they would be in administration a whirl. I see \$232k to Colliers Macaulay Nichols, presumably rent in Victoria. Those are nice offices, but not 20 thousand a month nice. I see \$73k to Telus, presumably telephone and internet. If you had 50 staff working from 50 locations, you wouldn't spend 6 thousand a month on telecom. I believe you have about half that headcount in two locations. Call Telus. Ask them what can be done.

With respect to Trust Council's \$951k budget, legal billings in the 2009/10 FIA report are at least \$260k. Maybe the Trust needs a lot of legal advice, maybe you're suing or being sued a lot, but that seems high to me.

Finally, we come to the big pot: \$4MM in local planning services. To me, this is completely off the scale. I know it's not that the planners aren't busy. We've had two cases in the news in the last three months on Salt Spring where applicants have been forced to hire contract planners at their own expense because staff planners aren't available. The Trust planners are doing something else, and it's not local planning in the conventional sense of the term.

The December staff report to the Salt Spring LTC shows 50 applications in queue somewhere, 26 of which are subdivisions, 6 development permits, and 11 rezonings. In 2010, 12 subdivision applications were closed (I don't know that this means approved), along with 6 development permits and 3 rezonings. Because Salt Spring contributes 40-45% of the total Trust budget, that output cost taxpayers here \$1.7MM ballpark. I went looking for comparable numbers elsewhere. What could be better than Bowen Island, which is in the Trust area? Their website doesn't have subdivision or rezoning statistics, but it does have development permits. In 2010, they had 18 applications and issued 16. Bowen's planning budget in 2010 was \$400k.

Let me recap for emphasis: Bowen processed 16 development permit applications to completion and it cost them \$400k. Salt Spring processed 6 development permit applications to completion, perhaps 21 if we're liberal about what an application is. It cost us \$1.7MM. Four times the cost, with at best 25% more output. If Salt Spring's share were \$500k or even \$800k (double Bowen's), it might be defensible. It's \$1.7MM. For Salt Spring taxpayers, this is a million dollars a year vanishing into thin air. This budget item is seriously out of control (and probably not just on Salt Spring). You need to do something about it.

(I see that the chair of the Financial Planning Committee is Alison Morse, a Bowen councillor. Surely some Bowen wisdom about controlling the cost of local planning could be imported via her contacts.)

I expect from my own conversations with friends and neighbours that you will see a lot of negative feedback on the proposal to increase trustee remuneration. People pick up on the most visible things and there are few things more visible than a 70% bump in Trustees' stipends (on Salt Spring; other island increases are smaller). I am concerned about overall expenditures but, on this item, I think you have done things right. An additional \$65,000 per year is small potatoes in the overall Trust budget. On Salt Spring in particular, where the demands on Trustees' time is substantial, I hope an increased stipend will result in more people, particularly younger people, considering standing for office. I encourage you and Trust Council to stick to your guns on this item.

Finally, you specifically requested opinions about whether you have struck the right balance between services and tax bills. I don't think you have. Over half your budget goes to local planning and, in this locality, not much local planning is happening. Overhead in Victoria is too high and growing. Trust Council has expensive and extensive strategic plans, for which I believe you will have scant public support once residents realize what is proposed, and meanwhile has completely dropped the ball on its oversight of how public funds are being spent.

Norbert Schlenker, Salt Spring

14. Saturna Island Property Owners Comments on Islands Trust 2011-2012 Budget

As president of the Saturna Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Islands Trust's proposed 2011-12 budget. The SIPOA membership of over 200 represents almost half of the island property owners.

By way of background, it will be helpful for the Trust to know that for past the five years our Association has polled our members to determine their top concerns. Each year, members consistently have stated that property taxes are the top of their list.

This year SIPOA has taken care to review your budget documents in detail. After discussions with various Association members, we are of the opinion that the Islands Trust 2011/12 budget is excessive and that it can easily be pared back so that no increase in property taxes will be necessary.

Firstly, Trust expenditures, proposed at \$6.9 million, seem unnecessarily high to perform the Island Trust's required functions. And, more specifically, the two new proposed expenses relating to Saturna Island for a total of \$8,000 can easily be eliminated from the budget.

It appears that the Trust is under the impression that most of us who live on Saturna are millionaires or that residents do not care about taxes or property owners here could easily afford tax increases. The reality is very different: many of us who retired with non-indexed pensions have not had an increase in years; many who own property here are just making ends meet. In fact, increased property taxes have become a financial burden for many who are trying to maintain themselves in light of the ferry fare increases being projected by BC Ferry Corporation. The Islands Trust should be taking these kinds of costs into consideration before proposing a 7.3% increase in expenditures.

Your documents illustrate that the Islands Trust has increased general property taxes for years. For 2011/12, we note the proposed levy is \$6,070,000 (Budget Summary 2011-2012, Property Tax Levy from Local Trust Areas, top of page 3). This represents an increase of \$314,919 or 5.5% from the 2010/11 amount of \$5,755,081 (Budget History, General Property Taxes column).

Further, you state that \$57,000 of this increase in revenue is expected to come from an expanded property base (Budget Summary 2011-2012, Property Tax Levy from Local Trust Areas, mid-page 3). Where do you foresee this expanded property base to come from on Saturna? And on what basis should this \$57,000 benefit the Trust staff?

More generally, the "Budget History" table demonstrates that the Trust does not explicitly state the actual change in taxation percentages. For example, each year you have inappropriately understated the actual general property taxes increase percentage by the "non-market growth" amount. When total property taxes are proposed to go up by \$314,919 from 2010/11 to 2011/12, please do not publish this as a 4.4% increase (Budget Summary 2011-2012, pg. 1) when in fact its 5.5%. This is disingenuous at best.

Looking over your budget figures for the past several years, the size and unfairness of the general property taxes increase becomes apparent. Comparing your proposed amount for 2011/12 to the amount eight years earlier (for 2003/04, which was \$3,124,380) (Budget History, General Property Taxes column), we find a 94.3% increase!

For the same 8-year period, the CPI Victoria increased from 100 to 113.1 - or 13.1% (Statistics Canada, Consumer Price Index, by city, 2011-01-24). How can Islands Trust justify this disparity of more than seven times? The number of Gulf Islands remains unchanged. Raising taxes should be the last resort of government, not the "easy" solution that can be enacted with little opposition to fund an always-present litany of new or

desired policies and programs. Perhaps if you could take a more serious look at the demographics of the Gulf Islands you might better understand the impact of the current Canadian economic situation on Saturna.

On behalf of our members we urge you to freeze the general property taxes 2011/12 total levy at the prior year's level - \$5,755,081. Clearly this can be done because you did this for Bowen Island: the 2010/11 amount is shown as being \$224,517 (Budget History, General Property Taxes column), and the 2011/12 proposal is for \$224,000 (Budget Summary 2011-2012, Bowen Municipal Property Tax Levy for Islands Trust, page 3).

Forcing an increase on Saturna and on the islands other than Bowen, blatantly violates constitutional principles of equal taxation.

Murray Rankin, President, Saturna Island

15. trust budget

First and foremost I feel very strongly that the Trust should not be approving a trust budget especially where you are approving raises to yourselves. I wonder where commercial land increase and approval for Salt Spring and probably other islands fit into this budget?

Your consultant doesn't seem to understand that comparing apples and oranges doesn't work for us in the Canadian Gulf Island Trust area. Referring to other countries and what they are paid doesn't work for me. Neither does comparing urban and rural or full time and part time.

Many of the things in the budget don't mean anything to the average person ie. cadastral survey . I had to look it up. Does green shores for homes also cover the lakes or just the ocean since it seems to be mostly set up by the Americans?

Others appear to be the same thing but under different titles. Personally I feel very strongly that there is a great need for local government control or at the very least representation by population as is a large part of democracy.

Carol Miller, Salt Spring

16. proposed tax increase

No taxation without representation or should I say-- without a genuine government which would have the power to assure the population that all of the water supplied to the residents was safe to use.

Jean Elder, Salt Spring

17. 2011 Budget and proposed Budget Increase

I write to express my opposition to any budget increase for 2011.

I am currently away from Salt Spring, and having been since the beginning of January, have just become aware of the deadline to comment. I believe that the trust needs to show leadership and work with the funding available without seeking an increase. In these economically troubled times and Salt Spring is noticeably experiencing them as well It behooves our local governing bodies to hold the line on taxation. Salt Spring taxpayers particularly commercial ratepayers (I am one) are looking for tax relief and as one recent businessman commented at end of November or early December, "current levels and increases are not sustainable".

Discretionary spending usually suffers and is the first to go during times of restraint and the Trust should be no different. There should be a freeze on hiring and the Trustee wage hikes proposed need to be tabled. This budget needs to be re-examined and adjusted so as to reflect no increase to taxpayers if for no other reason than to

reflect fiscal restraint in today's economic climate. You only have to look as far as last season's dismal tourism figures, slumped housing market, collapsed construction market, business closures, poor retail sales on Salt Spring and throughout the entire Trust area to clearly understand the gravity of which I speak. Now more than ever the Trust needs to show leadership with budget cuts, but moreso that it is listening and hearing taxpayers.

Jeff Outerbridge, Salt Spring

18. Increase in taxes

Please be advised that I am adamantly against any tax increase at this time. The reasons for my opposition are as follows:

1. We continue to be in a recession and under those circumstances restraint is appropriate.
2. Most other government organizations are trimming the size and cost of their budgets, and the Islands Trust should be doing the same.
3. There was a recent increase in wages and two new positions created at Islands Trust which has already driven the budget up.
4. There is no new program that justifies this increase.
5. Here on Salt Spring we have already had increases within the last tax year, and the tax burden is already too heavy.

NO INCREASE

Darlene Steele , Salt Spring

19. Annual Budget

The Islands Trust budget proposed for 2011/12 is 6.9 million dollars is almost 200% more than it was in 1999/2000. It is up about 400% increase since 1991.

I object to the Islands Trust budget.

More has to be done to minimize or even reduce the never ending increasing cost and expenses to the tax payer year after year after year.

The Islands Trust now costs an average of \$276.00 per person for every man woman and child living on the Gulf Islands. Additionally the Islands Trust appears to me, to becoming a level of government wanting to compete with, and duplicate the efforts of other government departments that the tax payer also supports. (ie RDN services, groundwater, provincial studies, and private activities. The Islands Trust in my view needs to stick with its mandate for preserve and protect related to land use and that's it.

The Islands Trust is quickly becoming a growing bureaucracy competing with existing ones. For example, why is the Islands Trust involved in Greenhouse gas matters and budgeting money for that? There are numerous private bodies, individuals, and government agencies dealing with the issue. Why is Islands Trust debating what low cost housing means and incomes and who qualifies etc. Other Government already has a say in those matters. Just stick with zoning and land use. This is why the budget for the Islands Trust grows every year. ...need money to meddle with everything you dream up to meddle with even when someone else or some other government body is already doing it. The Islands Trust has got to examine what it is you are supposed to be doing. Islands Trust is out of control and something has to be done about it.

Eric P. Moeller, Gabriola Island

20. 2011 proposed budget

One of the hallmarks of a competently managed organization is its willingness to remain focused on achieving its core objective(s) effectively and efficiently before pursuing other agendas. This is particularly important for an organization that is charged with the public trust, and that is funded from the public till. The Islands Trust seems to have lost sight of this responsibility, and of the notion of fiscal restraint.

The Islands Trust is charged with a single, over-riding function: land use planning. During the last decade, however, it has ballooned into a bureaucracy that encroaches on or duplicates the efforts of other regional, provincial and federal agencies while neglecting its own singular mandate. Proposals for development and re-zoning languish for years, to the point that some applicants resort to the use of "contract planners" in order to inject life into the process...essentially paying twice (with their taxes and then with the contract fee) for a service the Trust claims to be too overburdened to provide in a timely manner.

A substantial element of the proposed budget is the increased remuneration to the trustees based, in part, on the amount of time each spends relative to current compensation. Attempting to use the compensation of Regional Directors or San Juan Councilors as a basis of comparison to that of trustees is ludicrous. The RDs and Councilors are charged with delivery of a broad range of services, whereas the trustees have only one. As noted above, the trustees are choosing to expand their workload. They (and we) would be better served if they stayed within the scope of their legitimate authority and jurisdiction.

A budget of nearly \$7million to manage the land use planning of thirteen islands and roughly twenty-five thousand people is an extravagance the taxpayers should not have to bear.

Julia Lucich, Salt Spring

21. PROPOSED BUDGET

I wish to lodge objection to the proposed Trust budget. My wife and I have suffered rapid and unsustainable budget rises since moving to Salt Spring in 2005. The rate of increase in property taxes far outpaces inflation and has done since our arrival. I understand the rate of increase is close on 94% over eight years compared to municipalities like Victoria which have had a 13.1% increase in the same period.

The reason for the increases is apparent in terms of efficiency. I understand from senior Trust staff in Victoria that the cost to the Trust in processing only one rezoning application, that of the Salt Spring Coffee Company, was in excess of \$200,000. The fee paid to the Trust by the applicant for processing that application was \$5,500, representing an enormous shortfall that has to be met by taxpayers. If the trustees and their staff are incapable of efficient, transparent and accountable management, the island residents will increasingly turn to the alternative forms of government. The inefficiency demonstrated by trustees and the trust a disgraceful waste of resources and is worthy of investigation by the Auditor General who I have written on the subject.

Bearing in mind that the Trust has jurisdiction on land use matters only, the funds required to service it are unacceptably high. Taxpayers cannot be expected to continually support an organisation, however, well meaning, that demonstrates such inefficiency and bloated bureaucracy. Increases should be frozen and over a period of time, taxes progressively reduced to reflect the level of charges that prevailed a decade ago. If the Trust is incapable of trimming its own budget, that trimming will be done by island residents who will increasingly support a move to incorporation.

George Grams and Geri Ramsay, Salt Spring

22. Islands Trust Budget 2011-2012

I am against the Islands Trust increasing their salary.

As well as a significant raise in taxes which is far above the inflation cap, like most government bodies that rely on tax dollars, the Islands Trust does not count the increase in the BC Assessment Authority base from new housing etc. in their figures. This increase usually runs around 2% and higher in good times. This increase alone makes up the 2% cap inflation of taxes. So when a local government suggests they are only asking for a 4 to 5 % increase, in truth, it is a 6 to 8 % increase.

When defending themselves, the Islands Trust is quick to tell us how unique they are and that they have a singular mandate to preserve and protect through land use and that they have far more representatives per capita than any other form of government in the world to carry out this single mandate.

Now, when the Trustees want more money, we find them comparing themselves to municipalities and the San Juan Islands who all have about 1/5 of the elected members per capita compared to the Islands Trust looking after many more duties including infrastructure, roads, transportation, fire, police, water, building inspection, land use, parks and so on for far greater populations.

Significant money is spent sending the four executive and staff to different municipal functions and seminars such as the Union of BC Municipalities. And yet the Islands Trust seems to be against municipal government in the Gulf Islands as witnessed recently on Salt Spring Island.

The Islands Trust spends a lot of tax payers dollars chasing initiatives that fall outside of their mandate and working tools. I would very much like to see a budget break down in Planner time and dollars spent outside of the Official Community Plans and land use business.

In these hard times, the Islands Trust needs to regroup and look at itself and its spending and think hard about what is happening in our communities. Governments all over the world are having to do this and are making drastic cuts to their spending.

In our area, communities are becoming more and more unhealthy as we lose our young people and drive away the small business economies that keep them in the Gulf Islands. Schools are floundering and ferry fares are rising steadily as service decreases.

Now is not the time for the Trustees to give themselves any type of a raise. Instead they should be showing leadership and tightening their belts along with everyone else and looking for ways to create some small friendly economies and keep our young families on the islands along with the much needed working people that do not have comfortable indexed pensions.

We need far sighted leadership and balance for a healthy community.

We are being told "what's the problem with this increase? It's only between \$12.00 to \$15.00 extra for the average \$400 to \$500 thousand dollar home", but it is still 4 to 6 % increase added to the inflation that we all are under and a very poor representation of leadership.

John Money, Saturna

23. TO TRUST COUNCIL AND ALL TRUSTEES RE: 2011 Budget

Here are six reasons for not approving your current 2011 budget and salary increases:

1. The premise of asking the public for feedback about any budget increases is generally seen as merely

procedural when there is really nothing that empowers taxpayers to do anything whatsoever to counter-petition Trustees not to vote themselves pay raises. It is not as if we can expect any significant response to our concerns when it is presented with the synchronized supporting documentation of a recent consultant report, ironically one the taxpayer themselves paid for.

2. There is certainly an acrimonious sentiment on Salt Spring for any suggested increase to salaries for our local trustees, trustees who have consistently inflamed unity within the community and cynically and *blatantly claim that they do not in fact represent islanders but rather the exclusive interests of the Islands Trust*. But quite apart from all that is the observable reality that the current financial compensation offered Trustees has never stopped a fairly large number of candidates from running in our local elections. The sheer numbers of ideologically bound, anti-development characters on our island ensures there will forever be at least two people more than willing to hold this elected position. In fact for all intents and purposes, Salt Spring runs on volunteer governance from water boards to advisory committees to the Parks and Recreation Commission. I think it insults the tax payers' intelligence to hear of such incredible pay increases presented as being needed to attract more Salt Springers to get involved. This election year alone Salt Spring island expects to have at least 25 people running for the two Trust positions regardless of any pay increase! We need local trustees voting for our community needs and interests and higher taxes are not on that list!

3. I would offer a counter-proposal to your continuing budget needs; Trust Council should consider in all seriousness, a request that the Province expand the requisition of taxes to all British Columbians. If Trust Council and its Trustees really wanted to be fair they should re-examine their own 'Object of the Trust' and realise that if protecting the Gulf Islands is truly "for the benefit of all British Columbians" then surely it is time to ask all British Columbians to pay part of the Trust tax requisition. For years this has been a tax that only islanders have shouldered the increasing burden of. Clearly, preserving and protecting the Gulf Islands, being financially beneficial to all British Columbians, in the name of Beautiful BC and its lucrative tourism industry, from BC Ferries to anyone else benefitting, suggests that preserving and protecting the Islands Trust Area is a Province-wide responsibility!

4. More obvious is that at a time of fiscal restraint and a tentative economic recovery, the idea of increasing the salaries of local Salt Spring Island trustees by over 100% is a slap in the face to taxpayers and anyone else working, who has been asked to tighten their belt.

5. *Key point: The extra-curricular interests of Trustees do not fall inside the parameters of the land planning job description or legislated mandate per se and they are not something the taxpayer is particularly interested in paying more for!* In recent years there has been an observable expansion of responsibilities being taken on 'willingly' by local island Trustees who in my opinion have been stretching the scope of the original mandate of the Trust Act, at the taxpayer's expense. Trust committees that attempt to deal with non-enforcible issues such as low income housing, vacation rentals & various fees, rental controls, air and water quality studies and time spent thinking of ways to restrict other trustees' community dialogue through a "Protect George Ehring's individual Turf" policy, are all personal choices that individual trustees take on. *Trust Council needs to clarify the parameters of the legislation so that trustees understand when and where they are squandering tax payer's dollars.*

6. Finally, no one is disputing a *reasonable* pay raise here, it is more the disturbing fact that it is being calculated at over 100% increase for our local Salt Spring Island representatives, local trustees, I might add, that many islanders are pretty much dissatisfied with. But notwithstanding that, be honest with yourselves, isn't it simply out of line with the tight economic times we are living?

The population at large remains incredulous, how the budget for the Islands Trust, as a single service land planning function has grown to the magnitude it has, mystifies islanders greatly. The continued growth and cost of this bureaucracy that is over 40% borne by Salt Spring Islanders, can only be greeted with increasing resistance and challenges as time goes on.

The population is aware, through networking efforts, that loyal followers of the Islands Trust are very organized and we are sure you have been deluged with all manner of support for your actions, however, I submit to you that this is not a reflection of the general population support base of taxpayers out here. Please show a little restraint here, otherwise how are the less vocal and unorganized, silent majority taxpayers to view this request for feedback?

I urge all Trustees to ponder and not take personally this request to Vote No to higher taxation in this 2011 Budget but rather to look at ways to trim the budget, particularly, the over abundance of planners assigned per citizen.*

Addendum:

Many homeowners have felt pillaged over the years as your budget has consistently spiralled upward for this single land-planning service, simultaneously our land-use rights have gone in the opposite direction with many of our home insurance policies becoming null and void under newer and more encroaching Trust bylaws.

I remain skeptical when Trust Council would first use untold tax dollars to solicit yet another consultant study and only then issue a request for public feedback, after the study and the tax increase proposal have been massaged and 'wordsmithed' to support each other.

The growing perception is that the Islands Trust is paradoxically working less to uphold "a land use mandate" and more to becoming an instrument to promote a "stop the use of land mandate".

*One seriously questions why we have more highly paid land planners per citizen in the Trust area than any other region in British Columbia? We also have to ask, if Salt Spring Island is paying the equivalent of 1.8 million dollars to entertain a mere 6 development permits in 2010, how can the tax payer really be expected to over-look this kind of squanderous and inefficient land planning service and then support a budget increase for 2011?

Paul Marcano, Salt Spring

24. Comment on proposed 2011 budget

The budget needs to be reduced as there is too much money being spent on things beyond the Trust's jurisdiction. For example, the money squandered on studying shipping lanes. A letter from the Trust to the proper agency that has jurisdiction is the appropriate procedure which would have saved money.

The lack of institutional memory concerns me as it indicates the lack of proper organization (after 35 years!!). One cannot go to the "records" and find out why something was done. Planning is hampered, costs go up and the service goes down. The process gets extended and everyone becomes disgruntled. An example is our library has been funded and basically approved when it was realized that the approval from the heritage planning committee (not sure the groups exact title) was needed because two lots were being combined for the building. The planner used the rationale that the two nearby buildings are reasons that it should be approved when, in fact, the construction of those two nearby buildings was the impetus for the heritage group and the rule against combining lots. I am aware of several other inconsistencies and all this undermines any confidence that the organization is really doing its job properly.

I will be looking for a reduction in this years budget. Focus on the job, get things back in order and get the work done and done properly.

Mark Lucich, Salt Spring

25. 2011/2012 Islands Trust Budget

Climate Change

I am really disappointed in the apparent lack of any sense of urgency or priority in addressing the critical issue of a changing global climate and its potential impact on Islands Trust communities. I had hoped that Trust Council would have been alarmed by the latest scientific reports advancing the date when the planet will reach a tipping point – indeed, many are suggesting we are past that point already.

Given the dramatic weather events taking place around the world, I find it incredible that the budget News Release identifies “the most significant new strategic initiatives that the 2011-2012 budget would fund “as:

- upgrading and redesigning the Islands Trust website
- increases to the remuneration for trustees elected next November
- significant improvements to the management and accessibility of our records

I have identified \$15,000 for a “pilot” program for community engagement on Salt Spring Island and just \$5,000 for climate change mitigation on Salt Spring. Yet it seems more important to spend \$80,000 on website redesign and records management implementation –both valuable programs but ones that pale in comparison to the challenge we face of a growing climate crisis. In this regard, Trust Council needs to take a leadership role in setting priorities and not simply “responding to comments and suggestions received from island communities.”

The Trust must get serious about dealing with climate change and take strong initiatives to meet the targets set by LTCs. At a minimum, significant funds should be set aside for a dedicated staff person to assist local communities to develop appropriate actions, engage the public and implement meaningful Climate Action Plans. Our experience on Salt Spring has demonstrated the value of having a committed organisation (mostly volunteers) to do the basic data gathering and draft a Plan but we have been limited by a shortage of funds and, now, no real commitment to take the Climate Action Plan to the next stage of implementation next year.

The budget includes \$115,000 in grants for 2011-12 and I hope that most of this source of funding is to be directed toward climate action planning and implementation. Another possible source would be to defer the trustee compensation increase to the next fiscal year commencing in April, 2012 in the amount of \$64,000.

Peter Lamb, Salt Spring

26. tax increase and budget

I am horrified that you want to increase taxes on Salt Spring Island, and absolutely appalled that you wish to increase salaries for people who are blind to the realities facing taxpayers on Salt Spring and who have mismanaged their mandate and betrayed the trust placed in them.

First, the CPI has increased less than 30%, but I have seen my taxes on my property on Salt Spring increase right in line. I don't mean percentage-wise, but in terms of the dollar amount that I actually pay. After all, the increase in property values, upon which our taxes are based and which you are apparently trying to halt with your policies, are a part of the rise in cost of living. So trying to make the argument that our taxes have not increased as much as the CPI is deliberate misrepresentation.

Secondly, your expenditures have increased by more than 70%. Whose fault is that? Certainly not that of the poor taxpayer! Have you asked the taxpayers if they want such frivolities as a covered tennis court for the privileged few? Have you asked the great majority of taxpayers who supported the coffee company if they wanted to boot this excellent source of tax revenue off the island? Let's point the finger where it should be pointed--at the so-called trustees, who are betraying our trust instead of protecting it.

Thirdly, instead of seeking revenues for the island in terms of tourist dollars, you have deliberately passed by-laws that discourage tourism and, therefore, business. Have you taken a count of the number of businesses that

have failed, the number of residents who have sought a friendlier environment, since you began this anti-revenue campaign? Let's look at vacation rentals, for example. How much more in resources does a B&B consume than a vacation rental? Plenty! Washing sheets and towels on a daily or 2-3 day basis, people coming and going--whereas a weekly vacationer stays put and the linens are washed once a week. They buy food, they stay and explore, **THEY SPEND MONEY**. They aren't just on Salt Spring for the weekend.

What about new arrivals on the island who want to construct a home? You drag them through approval processes that take months and years instead of weeks. It's shocking.

So you think you deserve a pay rise? No way. In fact, I suggest you take a pay cut--try 30% so you can see what it's like to struggle to make a living.

Shirley Lambert, Salt Spring

27. Islands Trust Proposed Budget 2011-2012 and Proposed Trustee Salary Increase

I know that Saturna Island Property Owners Association president Murray Rankin wrote to Islands Trust with our association's comments on your proposed budget.

I would like to add my voice to that of other taxpayers and urge Islands Trust to:

- Keep its budget to last year's level;
- Examine its planned activities and evaluate the cost-benefit issues involved in any new measures that it envisions;
- Start to cut back on ambitious regulatory attempts that are outside its mandate, and costly to administer;
- Reject the concept of increasing trustee remuneration completely.

The Islands Trust budget has consistently grown over the years. Looking at the [1995-2011 Budget History table](#) (the document is also attached to this email, in case that Table should disappear from your website... as other documents have, recently), over the last 17 years, the budget went from \$2.9 million to \$6.9 million, with provincial government grants steadily decreasing , - from \$469,435 to \$50,545, in a classic weaning off.

Arguments to the effect that new measures you introduce are accompanied by various grants are moot. Once the new measures are in place, you have to administer them (more staff and trustee time and expense) and the taxpayers have to defray the costs – not only YOUR costs – but the costs of permits and, in the new regulations that you are planning to impose, the costs of hiring an array of various experts for reports, and opinions. Add that to the travel time charged by the experts to carry out their work. This is an extremely costly game, played on the taxpayers' back.

As to trustee salaries: trustees lobby and campaign to be elected. It is a voluntary choice they make, to serve their community. Trustees choose to do so, and I admire their dedication. However, their mandate is land use regulation. *Period*. I see no need to increase their stipend. If their workload is too great, perhaps they need to examine their approach to regulation, and cut back on some of their new projects.

Andrée Fredette, Saturna

28. Comment on Budget

The current projected budget is totally inappropriate under the circumstances. In good times, one might consider a 4.9% increase to be fair, but certainly not in an economic downturn where everybody across the board -- businesses, individuals, workers, governments -- are making cuts, not increases.

And it appears the Trust write-up on the budget is very misleading if not downright false. Of course any good spin doctor can make the most out of any set of statistics...but that said, the Islands Trust is using inappropriate comparisons, especially on the subject of Trustee remuneration.

The Trust wants to increase Trustee salaries 62.5% across the board. I live on Salt Spring, so I look at those numbers first and the Trustees on Salt Spring expect to give themselves a 118% salary increase. In the Trust-written analysis, it compares the new salary level (\$28,294) to the San Juan County municipal councillors, that receive \$33,000+.

This is a ridiculous comparison for many reasons. Besides the fact that salaries in the States are higher in almost every category, whether it be industry or government (for example, entry level accountants start at \$28-32K in Canada, but \$45K in the States), the Islands Trust fails to point to economic activity provided by counsellors or trustees in each area. The four main islands in the San Juans produce over \$160 million in tourism revenue annually (source: SJI Chamber of Commerce) whereas only \$18 million was contributed to the Salt Spring economy from tourism in 2010 and less on the other islands (source: TTI).

The Trust write-up doesn't look at an apples to apples comparison: what is the average income of individuals in each area and what percent of property taxes go to the municipality or Trust in each area? This comparison results in evidence that San Juan Islanders pay a lower percentage of their income for municipal services than we pay the Trust on Salt Spring Island. So before trying to pull the bag over our heads, get your facts straight.

Why didn't the Trust choose to compare salaries to municipal councillors in BC instead of the United States? All it takes is one to look up salaries on www.civicinfo.bc.ca to find salary levels in various jurisdictions. Let's see...Bowen Island, inside the Trust, is a little over \$8K per councillor; Tofino is between \$10K and \$15K (and can be verified with a call to the county's Director of Finance), etc. In fact, almost all salaries are below \$15,000 per annum, suggesting the Trustees do not deserve a salary increase at this time.

Also in the budget is an increase of over \$122,000 for "new programs". One line item in this area is \$6,000 for "trust executives and trustees to attend UBCM meetings". The Trust rests on its laurels that we should not be a municipality, so why attend municipality meetings? In fact, the \$122,000 budgeted expenditure for new programs should be completely abolished because of the economy. The Trustees have to earn the right to have these added benefits and programs to offer the residents on their islands...not just because they like going to meetings and want to be remunerated for it.

If Salt Spring were a municipality, there would be over \$470,000 per annum from the UBCM Working Communities grant that would assist local business development, the Chamber of Commerce and promotion of tourism. In the SS Tourism Management Plan (December 2009), it said without core funding none of the tourism promotion in the plan could be carried out. It said in the absence of funding as a municipality, it was left to "local government" to fund business development and tourism promotion. Yet it appears that dating back to 2000, the Islands Trust has never funded the Chamber of Commerce or tourism promotion on Salt Spring Island.

Until the Trust understands its duties are first and foremost to the residents of the islands and not to protect rodents, flora and other fauna, it should not be tapping any more tax revenues from its residents. Until it "protects" the economy, it shouldn't be recklessly taxing us for \$122,000 in new programs.

Lastly, the reason for the large increases (according to census and govt figures, CPI is up 21% over the last ten years, but the Trust has increased taxes 70%) is not because the Trust has earned the right to ask for more, it is because in its policies it has undermined the economy and tax base and therefore has less from which to draw. Sending off the SS Coffee Company appears to have cost Salt Spring \$1 million in tax revenues. Banning vacation rentals (that are allowed everywhere else in BC) dramatically impacted the local tax revenues for Salt Spring, and now Pender can look forward to the same. By not legalizing suites and cottages, the Trust creates another "opportunity cost" and the list goes on.

The fact of the matter is that the Trustees do not deserve a salary increase, and the Trust as a whole should be tightening and reducing its budget in this economy, not expecting more.

Mike Best, Salt Spring

Property Taxpayer with multiple properties on Salt Spring Island and Ganges Harbour

29. input for the budget

Thank you for your request for input regarding the proposed budget for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. After much reading and cross referencing, here are my comments and suggestions.

It is very thoughtful that the Trust would like to compensate the Trustees for their time away from home and the sacrifices they and their families make. We all know how time consuming and expensive it is to travel on BC Ferries.

These off island meetings do not work for the citizenry of the Islands Trust Area either. We have to travel on our own dime, and for those of us that work, it makes it close to impossible. As a consequence, we have a disengaged and disillusioned populace. We resent paying more taxes so the trustees can be compensated when we get nothing, not even a chance to participate.

So I would like to propose a solution: Video Conference Calls. Conduct all Trust Council meeting by video conferencing. Trustees stay on their respective islands, hold the meetings via the internet at some central location on each island and islanders can attend these meetings live or view them recorded online at a later date. We spend more than enough money with everyone going back and forth to be able to fund this. This alone would encourage a greater diversity of trustee candidates as it cuts down significantly on the time commitments.

Some suggestions as to software are Live Meeting from Microsoft, for more heavy duty video conferencing solutions, check Cisco, and for less expensive solutions, ooVoo Business Conferencing. It is necessary to give the Islanders something for our tax dollars, something tangible. With this one change, it will greatly increase transparency, and we will at last be able to say that we are part of the Greater Islands Trust Region.

Other specific comments:

1. In the document "Budget Summary 2011 -2012" page 6, we see that there is a \$4,000 decrease in the web-conferencing budget. This is where we should be adding the dollars not decreasing it. However, in the document, "Backgrounder, Catching Up, Local Trustee Remuneration January 2010" (I think this may be a typo and meant to say 2011), in about the middle of page 4, "Note: Physical attendance at committee meetings requires extensive travel for some trustees. Electronic meetings are being used more often in order to reduce the cost of travel." This is a contradiction; \$4000 is being cut out of this particular budget. However, it is difficult to see exactly how much was in this particular budget line item to begin with since it is all bunched together with under, (I don't really know) operating activities? There is very little detail, even in the audited versions of previous years.
2. On page 2 of this same document, "\$40,000 for software and expertise to redesign and rebuild... the website." I assume that there are website management costs within the budget somewhere, perhaps administration. So this \$40,000 will be on top of what we already spend on an ongoing basis. This seems rather excessive.
3. Lower down on the same page "\$40,000 to bring the management of our records up to modern standards." Haven't the records been managed before? Isn't this another way to say convert records into electronic files? Records would be posted on the website. Isn't this synonymous with redesigning and rebuilding the website? Isn't this what the website consists of, records? This seems like double dipping.
4. I strongly object to establishing a Grants Administrator position. Once established, it will always be part of the staffing, the salary will disappear into a line item, and we will never be able to get rid of this position. It serves only to increase bureaucracy for bureaucracy's sake. \$49,000 is a very good pay for a part time job, and although it is pointed out several times that it is only going to cost us \$10,000 since it is just an increase from 50% to 60% of full time, we are committing ourselves to this person's salary

and future increases forever. (By the way, if \$39,000 is 50%, then 60% ought to be \$46,800. Right off the bat, this person is getting a 4.7% increase in salary. Couldn't we have the pay tied to performance instead?)

5. Same page 6 – software and training - \$17,000. Would it be possible to hire staff that can read a manual or already know how to use the software? After all we do hire competent people, I assume.
6. Right below, cadastral re-alignment and orthophoto mapping would seem to be basically the same thing. CRD does this too. The Trust can certainly access CRD's maps. I think it is very important that the Islands Trust, in it's attempt to set itself up as the local government, try not to duplicate the work done by another arms of government. By doing so it explodes the budget not to mention their mandate. It is important to remember that all the Trust is responsible for is land use planning. That's it.
7. Finally the subject of Trustee Remuneration. The report conducted and submitted by the "independent consultant" Paul McKivett of James R. Craven and Associates, can hardly be considered objective. On page 19 it lists the reference documents, and thanks 2 Trustees, Christine Torgimson and Derek Masselink for providing the links. The fact that report relies on the trustees telling them what they should consider, in and of itself would invalidate the whole report. But please allow me to point out other problems with the report:
 - A trustees' position was not meant to be a full-time position. (page 2 of report) The fact that they try to micromanage the island and the planners and spend a considerable amount of time doing so, does not qualify as a reason to pay them more.
 - A trustees' position is NOT comparable to a director of a regional district. (page 6 of report) A regional director has numerous other responsibilities, from water and sewer, parks and recreation, library, transportation, building inspection, just to name a few. All that the trustee is supposedly responsible for is land use planning decisions. The fact that they would like to control Green House Gas Emissions is admirable yet beyond their mandate. Any time they spend doing so should not be considered "Islands Trust" work, and therefore not compensated for.
 - A trustees' position is NOT comparable to a San Juan County Councillor's position. (page 4 of report) A municipal councillor, has numerous other responsibilities that a trustee does not and the fact is San Juan County is in the US, not Canada. It is totally absurd that the consultant makes this comparison.
 - The consultant's figures of hours working on trust matters are based on subjective responses to the questionnaire supplied to the trustees. "No effort has been made to ascertain their correctness." (page 2 of report) I am not saying that trustee would deliberately falsify their answers. I think that they truly believe that when they are trying to fight climate change, this is for the trusts' benefit. But, it is not their job.
 - The consultant's job is to present objective data, not subjective, as to emphasize (bolded and underlined page 4 - 5) that "...Islands Trust as a local government with planning and regulatory authority similar to that of a regional district (emphasis mine)." The fact remains that the only authority the Trust has is that over land use planning. It still does not have responsibility over parks, water and sewer, transportation, building inspection...., that a regional district has. To use this phrase, out of context, as justification to pay them similarly is ludicrous.

In closing, I would like to suggest that the McKivett report be invalidated, and funds be used to for web conferencing and bringing the common islander into the equation. The Trust budget is bloated enough. Thank you for your attention.

Jill Treewater, Salt Spring

IN FAVOUR OF TRUSTEE REMUNERATION PROPOSAL

1. Islands Trust budget

As an island resident with no vested interest aside from a sense of fair play I wholeheartedly endorse the salary increase for trustees included in the budget. Little enough for the abuse they endure.

arthur black, salt spring island

2. Salary increase

I am in favour of a salary increase for our hardworking Trustees. We cannot expect the Island Trust Trustees to take on the responsibility and hard work that they provide for the citizens of Salt Spring Island unless they are decently compensated for their time and effort.

Mary Davidson, Salt Spring

3. Support for Islands Trustees salary increase

The way I see it is that IF our Trustees were paid only \$25 an hour, and IF they only worked four hours a day, they would make only about \$25,000 a year. I'm taking into account time off for weekends and holidays. This would make their income amount to roughly half the average household income for Salt Spring Island.

The problem is they twice as long and hard for this money. And they're presently paid not \$25,000, but only \$12,984 annually? What an affront.

For a job like this – extraordinarily difficult, time-consuming, frustrating and at times heart-breaking – they should be paid much more. The proposed salary increase to \$28,294 is certainly a modest one and should be supported by our entire community.

They deserve all our appreciation, in every way.

Dorothy Cutting, Salt Spring Island

4. support for Trustees salary increase

Please register this email as one islander's support for our Trustees' salary increase. Our two local trustees, Debrah Ferens and Sheila Malcolmson work tirelessly and effectively for this community's benefit and the Island Trust mandate. The proposed increase is totally within reason for their services.

Dar Mace, Gabriola Island

5. Comments

I would like to express my approval of the increase in remuneration for the Trustees shown in your budget.

Michael Wall, Salt Spring

6. Trustee salaries

I am completely in favour of the trustees salary increase. The idea that our trustees do what they do for as little as \$13,000 a year is astonishing. They deserve 5 or 10 times that amount for the time spent, let alone the flack taken. Please register my support for the increase.

Deborah Miller

7. Trust 2011 budget

I am writing to provide feedback on the Trust's 2011-2012 proposed budget, particularly in the area of Trustee compensation.

I am a resident of Salt Spring Island, and aware of the responsibilities and duties undertaken by our Trustees. I was surprised when I learned of the very low levels of compensation, and pleased at the proposal to increase them to a more reasonable level.

I agree with many of the reasons for doing so, especially the role that a reasonable wage can play in encouraging more diverse candidates that may reflect the diverse nature of our population. Very few individuals are in the position to take on such a demanding job if the wage is so low that they can not afford to do take the position unless they have other employment or another source of income.

It is also very important that we encourage Trustees to serve for more than one term. The job of Trustee is difficult (and often thankless...), with a fairly steep learning curve. I would suggest that constant turnover can discourage some of the good work that Trustees are prepared to undertake if they are unable or unwilling to serve a second term for financial reasons.

The job of Trustee is extremely demanding, and on Salt Spring anyway, can not be properly done unless one works full time at it. Other Islands Trustees also work very hard, delivering an important public service.

We need good Trustees. Please approve the proposed compensation package (including benefits).

Janis Gauthier, Salt Spring

8. comment

fully support the salary increases for our Island Trustees

kenneth ivor lee, Salt Spring

9. budget

I would like to add my support for Trustees to be paid a just salary. Only by paying a proper wage will we attract more people to run for Trust office. While it is most honorable to have people volunteer to fulfill these positions, the reality is that, low wages limits the number of people who can serve. Trustees who vote against wage increases are usually trying to look good on their island. If they really wanted to be sincere in their wage restriction they should turn down their wage increase when these are approved by the rest of council. Lets pay Trustees what it's worth to serve in such an important elected position. Otherwise we will see the rise of self appointed groups like MIRRA(Mayne Island Residents and Ratepayers Association). These non elected, self appointed groups will become our governing bodies by running and support financially the people who will further their agendas'.

Louis Vallee (former Island Trust trustee)

10. Salary increase

I would like to cast a vote in favour of increasing the trustee salaries. From what I can see, the job is a huge commitment in time and stress, and the brave souls who take it on should not have to endure financial hardship as well.

Frances Hill, Salt Spring

11. pay increase for trustees

It was disappointing to read the comments by the president of the Gabriola Island Ratepayers on the proposed increase in remuneration for our Local Trustees. It would be helpful to consider some facts.

We currently pay our Trustees \$10,200 per annum. The proposed increase to \$17,615 involves six years of catching up since the last review in 2004. For this princely sum, we expect a Trustee not only to uphold the mandate to preserve and protect the island land, but also to work full-time, frequently and stressfully overtime, dealing with us island people, our whims, and all too often our insults.

If adopted at the Trust Council budget meeting in March, the increases would not go into effect until after the November elections. So the Trustees would not have voted an increase for themselves, but for their successors - unless of course Sheila and Deborah choose, as I hope they will, to give us the opportunity to re-elect them.

Phyllis Reeve, Gabriola Island

12. Budget Proposals

I'm in support of the increased salaries for the Trustees, especially on Salt Spring Island.

Nora Layard, Salt Spring

13. Trustee Salaries

I request that you support on my behalf the present, dedicated, quality representatives Ehring, Christine, etc, now in service to the residents of Salt Spring Island. Working at least 50 hours weekly I suggest at least \$30,000/year would be more respectful of their endeavours.

Mary Lauzon, Salt Spring

14. Trustees Salaries

I support the increase in salaries for our trustees.

Tamar Griggs, Salt Spring

15. Trust salaries

I am concerned about the salary levels of the Trustees because they certainly do not now reflect the amount of time, effort and mediation that is required of the Trustees. Comparing their salaries to those of other elected officials makes it abundantly clear just how underpaid they really are. I strongly support a reasonable and respectful increase in their remuneration. It would certainly be one way of acknowledging the very hard work the Trustees provide for the islands and for this unique mandate to "preserve and protect".

Dr. Maureen Bendick, Salt Spring

16. Salary Increases for Trust Members

I strongly support the proposed increase for Island Trustees salaries. It is the right thing to do for all the time, effort, and the very difficult decisions that are sometimes made by members. And also some of the very negative attitudes they at times have to endure. As the gate keepers on development they have my support.

Ted Baker

17. raise

I am in favor of raising the pay of our Trustees. I feel it is important, so that more people might come forward to serve, it makes it a more democratic forum.

Tom Hoff

18. Trustee Remuneration

Considering the hours the Trustees spend on our behalf and the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" they must endure. I think that it is entirely appropriate that the proposed new salary range of \$28,294 annually be approved.

Such a stipend would allow a wider circle of island residents contend for the office.

As a former Trust advisor I know how dedicated to our interests and the "preserve and protect" goal the present and past trustees have been. We cannot go on asking them to give up so much of their time and other obligations without reasonable recompense.

The vocal few may present adverse opinion so I wish to add my voice of approval.

Elizabeth Kirk, Salt Spring

19. Trustee Wages

I fully support the wage increase for the Salt Spring Island Trustees. They have a huge workload and put in long hours for very little financial reward. However, I do not think the outer Islands need as large an increase as Salt Spring as their work load is much smaller.

A wage increase would help in encouraging a wider variety of people, including the younger members of our community, to run for the Trust.

Juliette Laing, Salt Spring

20. Trustee Salaries

I support the proposed increase in the salaries of our local trustees. They do an enormous amount of important work, and \$13,000 is simply not enough remuneration.

If the salary were higher, more good people might be able to run for the office; it should not be restricted to those who can afford to spend many, many hours with no need of compensation.

Marlyn Horsdal, Salt Spring

21. Trustees Income

I believe our Trustees deserve a better income for the constant pressure and hours of work they put in and for the abuse they receive in trying to do their best. Also I believe the present trustees deserve a retroactive increase of some sort or a sizeable bonus at least for doing all this work and for so low a pay.

Hope that helps in your decision for increasing their income.

Nelly Kosteljik, Salt Spring

22. salary increase

I am writing in support of the proposed salary increases. I think they are long overdue and will only help the long-term sustainability of the Islands Trust itself.

Murray Reiss, Salt Spring

23. trustees salaries

I support the raise in salaries for our Trust members on Salt Spring Island. They work diligently on our behalf for what I consider a very inappropriate remuneration. I feel strongly that our present trustees or anyone who would take on such an onerous job deserves to be very well paid indeed. This is not a placid community !

Sue Mouat, Salt Spring

24. Trustee Salaries

The writer, resident of Salt Spring Island, is in support of the recommendation to raise the salaries of our local islands trustees from \$13,000 to \$28,000 per annum. The raise would be well deserved given the work load and would put those salaries more in line with other local government officials (eg. CRD Director). Furthermore, it would likely encourage more potential candidates to offer themselves up as islands trustees in future elections.

Laurence Appleby, Salt Spring

25. Trustee Wages

I'm a resident of Salt Spring for 45 yrs. I want to express my support for the increased salaries of the current trustees. Thank you for your consideration.

Margeret Korrison, Salt Spring

26. Remuneration for Trust workers

I write to support the increase in remuneration for those elected to the Islands Trust.

I used the term "workers", (in the Subject line) as people elected to the Islands' Trust and similar areas of responsibility, are truly workers and ought to be commended and more appropriately compensated for their commitment to community, irrespective of political leanings because there is the intent to be actively engaged in the process of governance.

While I have reasons to wish the BC Liberals long gone, I cannot disagree with their initiative of improving both the pay or the pensions of elected members of the BC Legislature. People of all political persuasions give up a significant amount of time, and when their term(s) end, it can be difficult to get back into the work-a- day world

which they left behind. For those retired from the work-a- day life and involved politically, appropriate remuneration still must be made to recognize their efforts and what they may have given up to do this. So it should be for the Islands Trust elected officials.

People of all income levels should be able to commit themselves fully to public office. Are not most people becoming less rich in monetary terms these days? This makes it yet more imperative that we must have people from the grassroots able to speak for us. I do not want to see a bloody revolution in Canada because of an erosion of public support for those who work in community with others. Remember that erosion may go on for a long time before a sudden collapse.

Should it not be prudent to ensure that a person representing the majority of people, be able to speak to the concerns of the majority who live, work in, and contribute to the community? That is, rather than those of vested interests in local exploitation.

Please support our citizens who involve themselves so directly with and for us all. When you disagree with them, let them know. If there is not the response you want, you can always exercise your vote. But please acknowledge their efforts with money!

Moira Walker, Salt Spring

27. Trustee Compensation

I support the improvement in trustee compensation for all the reasons given in the budget papers. My own experience as trustee on Salt Spring Island in the previous term confirms the essential nature of the work as full-time, complex and stressful. In addition to the heavy, regular workload of development applications on Salt Spring, trustees are expected to attend advisory committees, task forces and other community activities in order to be well informed.

The increasing level of personal attacks will, undoubtedly, discourage some potential candidates from running for office. That is unfortunate but understandable. Certainly, we need good candidates who are conscientious, willing to work hard and responsive to community values and the proposed compensation package will, I hope, provide an offset to the challenges of the position.

Peter Lamb, Salt Spring

28. trustees salary increase

I really appreciate the work the Islands Trust trustees do on our behalf. It is a difficult and often thankless job requiring a lot of time and careful research and deliberation. They represent us in very important matters that help preserve this special and unique trust area, these beautiful islands, for all to enjoy. I was shocked to see how little they are paid and am very supportive of the increase.

Nancy Wigen

29. proposed new salaries

We fully support the proposed increase in salaries for the trustees. The amount of responsibility, time and work involved in being a trustee is onerous and not undertaken lightly. It certainly requires proper compensation.

Paula and Peter Stanford, Salt Spring

30. budget 2011

I am a resident of Salt Spring Island and have been for 44 years. I supported the establishment of the Islands Trust and continue to support the important work done by the trustees.

I support wholeheartedly the matter of a better salary than is currently paid our Trustees on Salt Spring Island. Even the proposed amount is barely enough to live on and in no way recognizes the hours put in by these two excellent people. The current salary is shameful.

Irene Wright, Salt Spring

OPPOSED TO TRUSTEE REMUNERATION PROPOSAL

1. Trust Raises

Given the politically charged atmosphere on this island, I would have background information available to the public to compare the proposed salary hikes to other elected bodies in the province. I also think that a 100% increase is too much however well deserved it might be.

It would be more appropriate to raise the stipends by \$5,000, and look to future increases to raise the salaries to a more appropriate level.

Finally, I would defer the implementation of any raises above \$5,000 to the next election term.

I do appreciate the hard work the trustees do, and the very critical environment which they have to contend with.

Jane Petch

2. Trustee raises

Trustee was never meant to be a full time job and the stipend was never meant to be a salary.

The Islands Trust has been suffering from "mission creep" for quite a few years and it is time to cut down on activity, not expand it.

Judy Cross, Hornby

3. Islands Trust Budget

I believe a Trustees job is difficult, time consuming and should be rewarded fairly. However I cannot approve of an increase in salaries for Trustees until a few issues have been resolved.

One is Selective By-Law Enforcement for the Trustees and their friends, or those they trade favours with.

Two is actually allowing development when their mandate is to preserve and protect ie allowing all 10 acres properties on Hornby with 2 houses to subdivide into 2 separate lots. They denied not one application as far as I know.

Did Sheila Malcolmson not just write the new Minister speaking of 10 lot minimums? Why did Islands Trust lawyer, Mark Skorah state in court that "preserve and protect" implies no legal obligation, they are just words?? Why then do you take our tax dollars?

Three is pushing of agendas without revealing where the push is originating. For example the majority on Hornby do not want regulation of short term vacation rentals by Islands Trust, yet they keep trying to officially classify them as illegal.

There are many issues, but in summation we want a transparent, fair and democratic form of government on these Islands with access to an independent review process before we allow any more expansion of Islands Trust expenses or mandate.

Could you please tell me where I can get copies of the letters you receive commenting on the 2011 budget?

I had forgotten to add a few points which I will include here:

I have not paid my share of Islands Trust taxes last year (ie property taxes) due to the fact that they do not carry out their mandate. One serious issue I would need resolved before I could ever resume paying my tax dollars into their budget is the lack of accuracy between what actually occurs at the Island Trust meetings and what is then submitted by the Trustee(s) and printed in the local papers as the summation of, or presented as the actual minutes.

Another example is a Trustee telling the public at an Islands Trust meeting that 3 steps will be carried out to test and remedy a 30 year old private landfill on my cul-de-sac. Then after the meeting the same Trustee takes me aside at the Co-op gas bar and tells me privately that the 3 promises, including a legally necessary well water test cannot be carried out.

I cannot support the same budget nor an increasing one while there exists the publicly undisclosed practice of a "Secret Vote", a term described to me by Islands Trust By-Law Officer Peter Phillips, whereby the Trustees can vote in camera with the result kept private. In the past they have publicly stated to the upset majority that steps will be taken to enforce a by-law, while voting in secret to stop all efforts to enforce the by-law as the offender was a friend of the Trustees, also the offender had a minority of Hornby residents the Trustees apparently wanted to ensure votes from.

A present Trustee on Hornby was asked how it was possible he was building a 5th house on 10 acres zoned for 2 houses. He stated that the inquirer should contact Islands Trust as "they will back me up on this."

There are many more issues but I have included only a few examples to show you the gravity of the situation. You cannot have my tax dollars in order to work against me and the environment. Eliminate the mandate from your web page and discussions but please do not say you are increasing the budget to further expand or reinforce the mandate until you actually enforce it to the level you are funded already.

If you can answer satisfactorily the issues above I will reassess the need for a changing budget.

Jane Talbot, Hornby Island

4. Proposed rRustee "Salary" Increases (sic)

Dear Islands Trust- my recent article in the Hornby First Edition is somewhat disjointed , a bit rambling- and has local nuances about what the Trustees actually do here- but the point still is Raises for Trustees are unnecessary as this is a trust position - not a directorship or job and though one could very well consider this position as work it , never was, and was never meant to be a "job" or livelihood. The Trust on Hornby has created more work for itself and if as on other islands- this is a reason to raise stipends then the Trust should be having an internal administrative and objective audit by an organization without vested interest.

R Gee- A Former Hornby Island Trustee

The Islands Trustees (First Editon Hornby Island # 314 february 2011)

Thanks for the material concerning the likely proposal the Island Trust will vote increased "Salaries". This is an unfortunate continuation of entitlement that's taken over islanders most recently. The Trust, is not the only institution where this happens- but is of more alarming concern because of the cause and effect.

Information provided quotes a non Hornby Trustee that the position should NOT BE the 'purvey of a wealthy person of independent means ' further direct evidence the Trust continues to play the classes against each other - an insipid attitude that is rife with many that there are "the rich" and then there are "the unfortunate" or " poor" more often as not " the entitled" owed their livelihood and ability to remain on islands. The CBC, Current, in December had a very interesting, episode over the disappearance of the "middle class" and why. "Middle Class" a reflection of the Great Canadian Historical Perspective- that "ALL" were treated equally, or at least government and opportunity attempted to set conditions so. Those that read this of course will know- that more recently- (The Current noted- early 1980's) this perspective has continually been eroded. I.E. now- the Government setting up a system of a Private Pension Plan - rather than tackling changes to the CCP- a note in this wider context.

This writer is questionably (once WAS) of the middle class- but can see that even in a time of recession Hornby had a 7% increase in the mil rate last year and from HIRRA's 2010 info it will be even more in 2011. Just wait for the new recycling system- now taking LESS Material and the New Fire Hall in 2012- the latter a 100% increase over 2011 budget Those that are assigned our trust- continue to erode the ability of some of us - who had worked very hard for many years, did without – moving out renting for the summer – without being treated as criminals – or without daily morning coffee at Licks -- to build and stay here. Why don' t you folks --- DECREASE the Taxes and therefore compensate US for putting you in power.

That is being angry and digresses. Lets put it this way "Trustees" have some how morphed into "Our duly elected representatives". - The Trust in approving such a position as "salaries" should also change the name of "Trustees" to some other nomenclature- for it is truly so- they are no longer "Trustees"- of no self or divided interest- Now more then ever Trustees will fall victim- as some already have- of catering to certain sectors of the community - to get "elected" so they can have their "salary". The news is rife with this "politic" in North America- both Canada and more so in the US with their budgetary problems. Elected officials are not doing what needs to be done because such action will hurt the electorate ergo their chances of re election. Heaven forbid one proposes further carbon taxes, environmental taxes, reduction in social programs, dragging out any up grading or renewal of infrastructure- squeezing to death health care and hospitals- because it is not affordable- but rather avoid decisions- because to do so means getting elected.

This ends with also saying WE are at fault here too. I would call for these Trustees not to be reelected- and our attention focused on those that will do something for our environment and our islands. Yes- one's out of pocket and necessary expenses- but nothing else as it should be

R Gee, Hornby Island (Former Trustee)

5. Trustee Remuneration - comment

I have been around for a while, and I have lived across Canada. Whether its heard from municipal councillors, Mayors, Reeves, provincial or federal Members of Parliament and in this case, Trustees, the argument for higher remuneration for elected officials is always a variant of the same old theme. "Pay more to get better people". There is not one empirical study that substantiates that proposition.

In fact, I observe that pay rates of over 100,000\$ for some Mayors, over 100,000\$ for Senators and federal MPs, 30-50,000\$ for municipal councillors - the list goes on - has not now, nor ever, immunized the tax payer from the presence of boobs, idiots, the intellectually challenged, the ignorant and even the criminal representative. The quality of elected representatives has not changed anywhere in Canada notwithstanding increased in remuneration.

Dare I say that pay rates have absolutely no relationship to the quality of people running for office.

The argument you use to increase the rates is a canard and at a time of recession and higher than ever living expenses an unnecessary expense. I suggest you don't pay them anything and invite volunteers to run. That would probably generate more quality people than your plan.

I am solidly and actively against an increase in remuneration as is proposed.

Michel Bourassa, Saturna Island

6. Budget

The Ratepayers on Galiano are most concerned by the ever-increasing tax burden placed on the Island property owners by the CRD and Islands Trust initiatives.

In these difficult economic times in particular the Tax Payers are constantly asked to tighten their belts. We believe it is time for the elected members who approve the costly initiatives which place an ever increasing burden on the taxpayer to focus more on cost effective solutions and demonstrate their commitment and leadership in the drive to curb increasing costs by holding the line on their own wages. It is time for the Trustees to also tighten their belt.!

If the trustees feel they are spending long hours and not being adequately compensated perhaps they are in office for the wrong reasons. They would be spending less energy and less of the taxpayer's resources if they focused on and stayed with issues within the Trust's jurisdiction and were more respectful of private property owner's rights.

We see no justification for an increase in Trustee's wages and therefore are opposed to any wage increase.

THE GALIANO RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Andrew Loveridge, President

7. Proposed Budget for Islands Trust 2011

I do not want to see an increase in the Trust budget, nor in Trustee remuneration for the upcoming year. The Trust needs to review its mandate, and keep its budget to a modest level in keeping with a forward goal of sustainability overall. Many residents lives within their means, do not consume excessively, and would expect the Trust to do the same, especially given its unique nature. If anything, there should be a streamlining process in place.

Barbara Johnstone Grimmer, Pender Island

8. trustee wages

Our costs are excessive and have been increasing out of line for some time. Any thought of increasing wages in today's economy is a hair-brained idea and would be of dubious merit. Think of our cousins across the line who did not control wages. The same will happen here.

I.R. Gordon, Pender Island