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HOUSE OF COMMONS
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Elizabeth May

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Saanich — Gulf Islands

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The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez
Minister of Transport
330 Sparks Street
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Building Tower C
Floor 8
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October 12, 2023

Dear Minister,

In September, the Southern Gulf Islands Forum met for a half-day discussion about issues and concerns including the marine environment that surrounds the communities in the Salish Sea. The Southern Gulf Islands Forum brings together elected representatives from local government, provincial and federal parliaments and local NGOs.

Transport Canada officials met with the Forum members in 2021 to provide an update on the management of anchorage sites and the Interim Protocol. Now your officials are meeting with Indigenous communities to consult on the transfer of authority of managing those anchorage sites from the federal Ministry to the Vancouver-Fraser Port Authority. It is an extraordinary and shameful reality that this is the first time Indigenous peoples of this area have been consulted about the abuse of their marine sovereignty.

Following a robust discussion of the forum members the undersigned members are writing to express our opposition to the transfer of any Transport Canada authority to the Vancouver-Fraser Port Authority in the Southern Gulf Islands.

The proper management of the sensitive ecosystems in the Salish Sea requires a coordinated and integrated effort yet by off-loading the management of the anchorages, Transport Canada is taking the easiest route possible and, in the process, further fragmenting the governance of the jurisdiction.



Once further fragmented it will be impossible to reverse course and soon enough the Vancouver-Fraser Port Authority jurisdiction will creep into the waters throughout the Gulf Islands.

Our communities have been struggling to address the inadequate management and enforcement by Transport Canada of the waters around our communities. We have endeavoured to work closely with the growing Indigenous marine stewardship programs. The solution is for Transport Canada to take responsibility for their jurisdiction, and rather than off-load it in bits and pieces, develop an integrated response that factors the social and environmental concerns and not just the economic bottom-line.

The undersigned ask that you move expeditiously to abort efforts to download responsibility from Transport Canada to the Vancouver Port Authority. On their behalf I am hoping to meet with you. We should act quickly while C-33 is before the House as we have time for helpful amendments for better management and protection of the Salish Sea.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands



Adam Olsen,
Member of the Legislative Assembly
Saanich North and the Islands



Gary Holman
Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director
Capital Regional District

Paul Brent
Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area Director,
Capital Regional District



Timothy Peterson
Executive Committee Vice-Chair,
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Tobi Elliot
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David Maude
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Dr. Deb L. Morrison
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Kristina Evans
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