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The Honourable Anita Anand
Minister of Transport

February 10, 2025

Re: Southern Gulf Islands Forum

Dear Minister,

I greatly appreciate that you have now replied to the letter signed by multiple orders of government within Saanich-Gulf Islands, elected trustees of the Islands Trust, elected members of the Capital Regional District, Mayors, Indigenous leaders and councils, and community leaders of many conservation and advocacy groups. Led by the provincial MLA and by me as MP, this multijurisdictional group has been meeting for years as the Southern Gulf Islands Forum.

We tackle many issues of community concern, from housing, to reconciliation, some in provincial jurisdiction, and federally with different departments. Overwhelmingly our concerns relate to unsafe navigational situations, threats to marine ecosystems and problems within federal jurisdiction, often created by federal agencies such as the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority.

We are frustrated by the tone-deaf response from multiple departments to the neglect of basic regulations, legislation and funding to protect our coastal waters (the Salish Sea), its ecosystems, wildlife and human communities. We had hoped our letter of March 26, 2024, would result in change from the three ministers we wrote: Environment, Transport and Fisheries and Oceans.

Your reply of December 19, 2024, was the only one we received. Notable that you were only shuffled into Transport on September 19, 2024, and still you replied. For that I do want to thank you.



The Southern Gulf Island Forum convened on January 14, 2025, and reviewed your letter.

The response was not positive. I have been asked to convey to you and Ministers Guilbeault and Lebouthillier that our regional community and multiple orders of government are beyond frustrated and angry. We are most disheartened. There seems to be an awareness that the proliferation of mooring buoys in our congested harbours is now a crisis. We are devastated that C-33 is no more. We are aware that no one minister or party is to blame for the parliamentary disfunction that allowed years of work on Bill C-33 on railway safety and marine issues, tabled for First Reading more than two years ago, to die on the Order Paper on January 6, 2025.

C-33, originally introduced by former Transport Minister Omar Alghabra, completed its clause by clause in committee in December 2024 has now died on the Order Paper with Prorogation. Looking to other bills related to our concerns, none have made a dent. The promised improvements when the Derelict and Hazardous Vessels Act, passed in June 2019, have not materialized. The Vessel Remediation Fund passed in the omnibus budget bill in 2023 has not a single regulation.

The Vancouver and Fraser Port authority continues to direct massive industrial freighters into the waters of the Salish Sea for “free parking” with no concern for the damage caused by their dragging anchors and the impact of noise on our increasingly endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale population. The so-called “sanctuary zones” or the Ocean Protection plan have not been enforced. Nothing on the Canadian side of the international border that transects the Salish Sea is close to half as effective as routine measures on the US side.

The fact that this massive harbour authority has not even once consulted with the First Nations in whose territory it operates, constituting a daily violation of UNDRIP and the local Douglas Treaties, adds injustice and insult to the injury.

I hate to be blunt, and I have personal affection for all my colleagues in the House, especially for those, like you, who do exemplary work, but being an MP should not deprive me of powers of observation. The departments of DFO, Environment and Transport appear to think the peoples and governments of Saanich-Gulf Islands are like small children, who need a pat on the head now and again and are far too ignorant to realize we are being conned. We have been led a merry chase, working hard on bill after bill only to see no changes, no improved protection of our marine ecosystems, no relief from the daily abuse of the anchorages in our waters and hazardous obstructions to navigation. We are fed up and want to see action and accountability.

I do hope that we can find a way to make progress before the looming election.



Elizabeth



Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands
Leader of the Green Party of Canada

Cc:

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The Honourable Dianne Lebouthillier, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

Administrative Assistant, Pauquachin First Nation

Mairead Boland, Saturna Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Rob Botterell, MLA for Saanich North and the Islands

Paul Brent, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area Director

Aaron Campbell, North Pender Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Theresa Coles, Constituency Assistant

Chief Rebecca David, Pauquachin First Nation

Chief Cindy Daniels, Cowichan Tribes

Jeanine Dodds, Mayne Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Debra Eindiguer, Chief of Staff, Office of Elizabeth May, O.C., M.P.

Gordon Elliott, Director of Operations, WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council

Tobi Elliott, Chair, South Pender Island Local Trust Committee, Islands Trust

Aysha Emmerson, Constituency Coordinator, Office of Elizabeth May, O.C., M.P.



Dag Falck, South Pender Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Lori Foster, Executive Administration Assistant, Islands Trust

Clare Frater, Director of Trust Area Services, Islands Trust

Lisa Gauvreau, Galiano Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Jamie Harris, Salt Spring Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Noah Hollis, Outreach Coordinator, Office of Elizabeth May, O.C., M.P.

Gary Holman, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director

Chief Chakeenakwaut (Pam) Jack, Penelakut Tribe

Samantha Jack, Reception, Penelakut Tribe

Ben Mabberley, Galiano Island Trustee, Islands Trust

B Manson, STÁUTW First Nation

David Maude, Chair of the North Pender Island Local Trust Area Trustee Corner

Lee Middleton, Saturna Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Deb Morrison, North Pender Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Steven Parkinson, Legislative Director, Office of Elizabeth May, O.C., M.P.

Laura Patrick, Salt Spring Island Trustee, Islands Trust

Patricia Pearson, Constituency Advocate, Office of Rob Botterell, MLA

Timothy Peterson, Chair, Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee, Islands Trust

Ned Taylor, Government Program Manager, WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council

Becky Wilson, Governance Support, STÁUTW First Nation Council

