

PROTECT GULF ISLANDS FROM POLLUTION: - Pleasure Craft Sewage Pollution Prevention Regulation

A long road travelled to reach our goal of cleaner marine waters, and the journey continues.

Over the years islanders have applauded the endeavours of the Islands Trust to use Advocacy to forward many serious concerns for our marine water & wildlife. Many times these endeavours have fallen on deaf ears but you our Trust Council & Executive Committee have persisted, and we thank you.

The Pleasure Craft Sewage Prevention Regulations have been on your Advocacy list for a very long time with many of us islanders applauding your stamina to continue with Advocacy towards preserving & protecting the marine waters of the Salish Sea & beyond.

On July 3, 1998, the Islands Trust put forward 15 bays, inlets and harbours in the Southern Gulf Islands to the then B.C. Environment requesting no discharge zones be implemented in the stated areas. The data supplied was provided to the Islands Trust after many months and hours of hard work given by volunteers from several islands to collect and compile all requested data.

Just prior to seeing these areas designated, the political administration changed in Victoria and the many hours of volunteer labour and donated monies were trashed due to lack of interest at the provincial level for protection of our marine waters in the Trust Area.

But we, as well as the Islands Trust Council, have not given up on our marine waters as we continue to pressure senior levels of government on behalf of these marine ecosystems. Today I am once again asking for your support as we move forward with another request via Petition to have the Pleasure Craft Sewage Prevention Regulations changed to disallow further discharge of black or grey water by pleasure craft in the Islands Trust Area marine waters.

We islanders are tired & frustrated that our local marine waters continue to be a dumping area for raw sewage from pleasure craft, the waters where our grandchildren play on the beaches and our locals fish for crab, finfish & other indigenous sustainable fisheries. Where our Orca play & forage for chinook, Eagles nest and where the sea birds visit on the flyway.

At the moment the regulations allow the following the Islands Trust Area:

Dumping permitted because vessel is located in waters that are less than 6 nautical miles from shore to shore, and there is no reception facility that can receive the sewage in an environmentally safe manner, the vessel may discharge raw sewage if en route at a speed of at least 4 knots or, if discharge is not feasible at that speed, the discharge can be made:

a) during an ebb tide, while the vessel is en route at the fastest feasible speed and into the deepest waters that are located farthest from shore or,

b) While the vessel is en route at the fastest feasible speed and into the deepest and fastest moving waters that are located the farthest from shore.

As you will note these regulations give a very wide margin for interpretation.

Our aim is to call on the Government of Canada to bring into force stringent regulations to prevent the discharge of raw sewage in the Gulf Islands, and simultaneously work with the Government of British Columbia to build and fund an accessible network of pump out stations throughout the Gulf Islands to ensure that recreational boaters can access sewage facilities, and that the Gulf Islands can be freed from the environmental and health risks of untreated sewage (similar to the advantages now enjoyed by our neighbours to the south).

Please support on this initiative to finally have protection for our marine waters, and for all islanders, visitors to our shores, boaters generally and, especially, grandchildren as they play upon our beaches we all have the right for a Healthy Environment in which to live, work & play.

Please circulate the petition below, when completed with each 25 person signatures please send in to your MP (postage free). And this initiative will continue until the Gulf Islands are free from the discharge of black & grey water from Pleasure Craft into our marine environment.

Thanking you in advance

Regards, Sara J Steil, The Pender Islands Trust Protection Society, Director (steils at shaw.ca / ph: 250-629-6885)

Encl. copy of petition including requirements shown on page 3 of the petition.

Guidelines

1. Petitions must not be altered or have any text added.
2. Petitions can be either double-sided, or have a blank back page.
3. A petition should contain signatures of residents of Canada only.
4. There is no minimum age requirement for anyone signing a petition.
5. Each petitioner must sign, not print, their name directly on the petition.
6. If a petitioner cannot sign because of illness or a disability, this must be noted on the petition and the note signed by a witness. Aside from this exception, you can only sign for yourself.
7. A petition must contain original signatures written directly on the document and not pasted, taped, photocopied or otherwise transferred to it.
8. No photocopies, scans, e-mails etc. as petitions are only admissible in hardcopy.

Please return all original signed petitions, postage free, to your Member of Parliament.