



## PIERS ISLAND IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

P.O. Box 2223 Sidney, BC V8L 3S8

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January 31, 2023

Attn: Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee  
Jamie Harris - Salt Spring Island Trustee  
Laura Patrick - Salt Spring Island Trustee  
Tim Peterson - Lasqueti Island Trustee, Executive Committee Vice-Chair

### **RE: Salt Spring Island Special Property Tax Requisition**

Dear Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee Members,

Once again, quoting from your most recent documents, the "Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee is requesting a \$75,500 Special Property Tax Requisition for the 2023-2024 fiscal year in order to coordinate freshwater sustainability work on Salt Spring Island." The documents specify that the Salt Spring Island Special Property Tax Requisition (SPTR) will only apply to the islands that are part of the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area.

Since 2014, the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Committee has funded, through a special tax requisition, the Salt Spring Island Watershed Protection Alliance, "to support work related to the preservation and protection of freshwater resources on Salt Spring Island." All of the work completed by the committee in 2022 was focussed solely on Salt Spring Island, consisting primarily of development and digital promotion of a number of materials relating to rainwater, lake water quality, groundwater well educational resources, and two rainwater harvesting videos.

Your stated mandate again quoted is, "That beyond outreach and education, SSIWPA is not authorized to lead projects. Rather, it provides a forum that brings together agencies with jurisdiction over the Island's freshwater, services that provide freshwater to users, and members of the Island community with an interest in freshwater. This group helps identify pressing water sustainability issues, recommends paths to resolving those issues, and helps coordinate the efforts of lead agencies where required." The above is specific to Salt Spring Island only and does not include the 33 other outlying islands grouped in with Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area.

Piers Island Improvement District: Points Relating to the Special Property Tax Requisition

1. While stating in 2012 that the mandate was for all islands in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area, this has clearly never been the case.
2. The levy is solely implemented to support personnel who are not authorized to lead projects but only provide a forum that brings together agencies with jurisdiction over the Island's (Salt Spring) freshwater, services that provide freshwater to user, and members of the Island (Salt Spring) community with an interest in freshwater. They have no authorization to extend their mandate to other islands in the Salt Spring Island group.
3. The committee's mandate in the most recent correspondence states that it is to provide information for projects solely located on Salt Spring Island which include watershed management, rainwater harvesting, lakes, groundwater wells, piping, etc., none of which pertain to Piers Island with the possible exception of rainwater harvesting as it may relate to someone harvesting rainwater for their garden. A simple Google search provides all of the information required to bring one up to speed on that subject.



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4. The 2023-24 plan is, “to coordinate freshwater sustainability work on Salt Spring Island. \$60,000 for salaries/workspace/misc., \$1340 for meeting costs, \$14,160 for community events (Salt Spring Island) and communications.”
5. Piers Island drinking water is not supplied by freshwater resources in ground or below ground that are located on Piers Island and as such, we do not have a watershed in the real sense of the word.
6. Piers Island water system has a new 55,000-gallon glass fused to steel storage tower with fresh water supplied by the Capital Regional District (CRD) whose watershed is not under the purview of the Island Trust. The CRD and VIHA provides us with all of the information and guidance needed relating to water conservation and best use practices which we follow to the letter.
7. There is the appearance of the ‘Big’ island of the group running roughshod over the ‘smaller’ islands, by imposing a levy to which they have to contribute, and which is solely for the benefit of the ‘Big’ island. In other words, taxation without representation or benefit. This is contrary to the BC philosophy of taxation.
8. Piers Island is unique in the sense that while part of the Island Trust, it does not share the same freshwater challenges other islands in our group may face. Additionally, while the Island Trust exerts its authority over us, the CRD which supplies our water does the same. In both cases we have no direct input into the decision-making process.
9. The definition of a ‘special levy’ as outlined in BC government literature is as follows: ‘A special levy is raised by the trustees for an expense that is necessary, and which was not budgeted for and approved by the property owners at the last AGM.’ As this special levy was approved in 2014 and renewed each year thereafter, we can only assume one thing. The special levy is renewed each year for the purpose of having the other islands in the group subsidize a portion of the tax burden of the Salt Spring Island property owners for an item whose mandate again, is for the sole benefit of Salt Spring Island. Being that it has been renewed for eight consecutive years begs the question, why was the expense of this initiative not added to the Salt Spring Island taxation budget in 2015 and thereafter?
10. The original application Salt Spring submitted was to the Islands Trust for the levy to be shared across all islands. That application was denied by the Trust who had no interest in the proposal but who did offer the following remedy. Salt Spring could apply for the levy and approve it for the islands located only in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area. This was done and has been continued annually since 2014. If the Island Trust had no interest in supporting the initiative, why is it deemed appropriate for Piers Island to be required to support it with their tax dollars?

The Piers Island Improvement District stands firmly against the special levy being considered for 2023-24. Strictly on moral grounds, there is no justification for the special levy being applied to Piers Island property owners. We view the levy at the very least as being contrary to the principles of fairness and of being good neighbours. We are confident that the Salt Spring Island property owners, if made aware of our concerns, would not condone the action that has been taken on their behalf over the past eight years.

Should the recommendation be that Piers Island not be exempted from the special levy for legal or other reasons, and where for us, there is no recourse, we submit that the sum of \$1.00 would be a fair



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contribution on our part for a levy that in our opinion, should be carried in its entirety by the Salt Spring Island property owners through their own taxation system.

Respectfully submitted,

Piers Island Improvement District Trustees

*Monique Joubarne*

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Monique Joubarne, Chair

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Julien Bahain

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John de Jong

CC Adam Olsen - MLA for Saanich North and the Islands  
Judi Gedye - Bowen Island Municipal Trustee  
Sue Ellen Fast - Bowen Island Municipal Trustee  
Sam Borthwick - Denman Island Trustee  
David Graham - Denman Island Trustee  
Susan Yates - Gabriola Island Trustee  
Tobi Elliott - Gabriola Island Trustee, Executive Committee Vice-Chair  
Ben Maberley - Galiano Island Trustee  
Lisa Gauvreau - Galiano Island Trustee  
Joe Bernardo - Gambier Island Trustee  
Alex Allen - Hornby Island Trustee  
Grant Scott - Hornby Island Trustee  
Mikaila Lironi - Lasqueti Island Trustee  
Jeanine Dodds - Mayne Island Trustee  
David Maude - Mayne Island Trustee, Executive Committee Vice-Chair  
Aaron Campbell - North Pender Island Trustee

Deb Morrison - North Pender Island Trustee  
Lee Middleton - Saturna Island Trustee  
Mairead Boland - Saturna Island Trustee  
Dag Falck - South Pender Island Trustee  
Kristina Evans - South Pender Island Trustee  
Ken Hunter - Thetic Island Trustee  
Peter Luckham - Thetis Island Trustee, Islands Trust Council Chair  
Kate - Louise Stamford – Gambier Island Trustee  
Colin Plant, CRD Director, Board Chair, Saanich Councillor  
Peter Jones – CRD Director, North Saanich Mayor  
Gary Holeman – CRD Director, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area  
Paul Brent – CRD Director, Salt Spring Island Electoral Area  
Cliff McNeil-Smith – CRD Director, CRHD Acting Chair, Sidney Mayor