

October 25th, 2023

Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development & Innovation
Regional and Rural Development Unit
Rural Policy & Program Branch
Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP)
Economic Diversification Grant Application

October 25, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I welcome the opportunity to support the REDIP- Economic Diversification - Development Phase application being submitted by the Islands Futures Society of Gabriola Island, for funding of the Islands Alive: Local + Regional Solution Focused Collaboration Project. As Chair of the Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission I confirm our support for Island Future's REDIP grant application.

While rural and island communities share many common challenges and often have the best local knowledge to define their specific issues, problems and identify solutions, their work is often done in a solo island context, with limited funding opportunities, resources, collaboration and access to best/better practices.

The complex solutions required for healthy island economies, communities and environments are hard to achieve alone. They require a holistic and integrated approach, involving collaboration and mutual support amongst a variety of local and regional stakeholders, including the opportunity to explore and share innovative solutions among and across island and coastal communities.

As an Electoral Area of the Capital Regional District, we recognize and encourage community led generative and regenerative community, environmental and economic capacity building which will be of benefit to our (island/region), as well as, to all of BC's rural islands.

The **Islands Alive** project surmises that island resilience and wellbeing would benefit from the realized synergy of a collaborative, multi-issue (environment, economy, housing, food, water), solution-focused network, composed of grass-roots socio-economic community led organizations and regional stakeholders.

The Project will:

- Use innovative communication and data collection tools to engage a variety of stakeholders to explore the feasibility of how to create a model for a long term sustained investment in rural island communities;
- Provide detailed stakeholder analysis that considers the critical aspects of potential organizational models and frameworks for identifying regenerative solutions, and;
- Also consider current and non-traditional approaches for achieving long-term sustained financial resources that support generative and regenerative economic capacity building towards moving the Islands from a transactional economy to a relational rural and coastal economy.

We are particularly in support of the in-kind partnership Island Futures has engaged with the Rural Islands Economic Partnership Society (RIEP), which we understand will be the lead Partner on this initiative. Through RIEP's engagement with Island Futures on this development project we are assured that input from an 'all-BC' rural islands settler and Indigenous community perspective will be sought, heard and received. Thus, shaping a project that is truly a local and regional solution focused collaboration.

We are enthusiastic about being an active partner in the development of this project. We believe this initiative will be an important contribution for realizing thriving, inclusive, and enduring socio-economic capacity building across our Island and throughout the communities of BC's rural islands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Brent", written in a cursive style.

Paul Brent
Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area Director
Capital Regional District

