

Sent on July 21, 2021 - before the vote of concurrence - to the Salt Spring LTC

## Let's Talk Towers

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**To:** Laura Patrick, Peter Grove Islands Trust, Islands Trust, pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca

**Cc:** Elizabeth May, Adam Olsen. MLA

Wed, Jul 21, 2021 at 11:25 p.m.

Dear Trust representatives,

First – thank you for how hard you work, and for the grace with which you navigate the challenges our feisty yet caring community puts on your brimming plates.

Yesterday I indulged in a little late night reading – Planner Kristine Mayes' Staff Report on the Rogers-Crest Tower application. Then – keener that I am – I read every single submission you received on this issue. It has been quite an education. (Which according to one individual I need, as those opposed to this Rogers venture were accused of not having passed grade school science :)

If indeed we are the vocal minority as those who support this project have voiced, we may be the contingent that clearly sees how the promise and expectation of unlimited wireless growth and digital consumption puts yet more stress on our already imperiled natural world.

I don't envy you your juggling act - finding a balance between serving those who hunger for urban-like cell phone quality on a rural island and respecting those who have a big picture understanding of where big telecom's agenda may take us.

But I believe you can address the real issue here – the need for improved emergency radio services - by collaborating with CREST to come up with a viable plan that does not throw a commercial 5G-enabled cell tower into the mix.

Section A.4.4.1 of Salt Spring's Official Community Plan commits the *Islands Trust* to ensuring:

"our community continues to function as an authentic, resident-centred community in the face of internal and external pressures to change and grow."

Section C.5 of the plan: *Power and telecommunications Policies* pledges:

To accommodate the facilities that provide Salt Spring Island with necessary power and telecommunications services, **while minimizing impacts on neighbourhoods, community health, the natural environment and resource lands.** (C.5.1.1.1)

So – back to Planner Mayes Report.

## Land Use Related

Saying that this Channel Ridge site is a good place to put a tower because there is already one there implies it was a good place to put the first one. Which it wasn't.

- It is a residential area
- It is near a popular recreational site
- It is adjacent to a protected and vulnerable watershed
- It is a fire-hazard placed in a fire-prone forest at a time when we are experiencing periods of unprecedented and prolonged drought

As Planner Mayes notes, the property is in a zone rated HIGH to medium for important natural areas in the Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area.

**This provides you with a land-use related reason for non-concurrence if I ever saw one.**

## Project Description

Rogers may place 11 *initial* antennas on the tower. The total projected number is 22.

## Correct Numbers of Correspondence Received

**Cypress's Public Consultation Process-** 164 pieces of correspondence were opposed, 48 were supportive and 3 were neutral.

**Trust correspondence received to date:** (Yes, I counted everything I read.) 301 opposed to the project, including 64 petition signatures. 66 in favour.

## Health

The report included a misguided quote: "The Government of Canada notes ... Misinformation and opinions on the health risks from exposure to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields are increasing on social media and on the Internet". This statement is an affront to the many reputable scientists who have dedicated their careers and their lives to protecting communities like ours from the false belief that cell towers are safe.

And let's look at the source of that quote. Is a federal government that is lobbied by big telecom twice a day and is making billions this month from selling the 3500 MHz spectrum for 5G ready to admit that the product their associates are peddling is toxic?

## Trust Policy Related

1. **Yes** –Industry Canada likely revoked the 1996 *Letter of Understanding* on cell tower siting. Industry Canada created a Client Procedure Circular in 2008 that would have replaced any existing Letters of Understanding.

2. **No** – Industry Canada likely did not revoke our 2001 *Cellular Antennae Proposal Form and Procedural Guidelines*. How could they revoke a procedure we created? At some point, they may have suggested it was outdated.

I have yet to see anything about 1 or 2 above confirmed in writing by ISED. Have you?

3. **Double No** – ISED could not revoke *The Cellular Phone Transmission Antenna Location Policy Recommendations* made by the Salt Spring Advisory Planning Committee, which contrary to Planner Mayes' claim, **the SSI Trust voted to accept as policy in April 2001**. As you know, it is the most enlightened and protective radiation exposure guideline in the country. ISED can override it, but according to the Local Government Act, they can't revoke it. **Which means we still have this precautionary policy in place.**

### To Sum it Up

Allowing another commercial cell tower on Salt Spring today may create countless headaches tomorrow. Look at the asbestos fiasco. How many of us are still living with this known carcinogen in our homes?

Please act with courage and clarity.

Please separate CREST from Rogers. We can find a better option for improved emergency services.

Please protect our ecosystems, our climate and our health and safety,

Wishing you All the Best,

Oona