

CONSERVATION TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Comox Valley Regional District board, on occasion, elects to support province-wide concerns and issues in the form of a board resolution. These resolutions are normally forwarded first to the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC) for consideration but may also be forwarded directly to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). Based on the nature of the concern, UBCM will either endorse or not endorse the recommendation and if endorsed, will present the concern to the provincial or federal government on behalf of all BC municipalities and regional district.

Date of Board meeting: June 30, 2015

Board Resolution: WHEREAS the Islands Trust has successfully implemented a Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) which provides 65% property tax relief for landowners who enter into a conservation covenant to protect important natural features on their property;

AND WHEREAS the NAPTEP complements provincial and local programs and policies and does not result in any loss of tax revenue nor any significant additional costs;

AND WHEREAS regional districts and municipalities may wish to support and encourage landowners to preserve natural areas for current and future environmental benefits:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development be requested to grant local governments the authority to implement a conservation tax incentive program modeled on the NAPTEP.

This resolution was referred to: UBCM on June 24, 2015

A response was received on: June 22, 2016

Response from Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development: The Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption is specifically modelled for the unique circumstances of the Islands Trust and may not be applicable to municipalities and regional districts generally. Thus, the Province is currently not considering this request for legislative review. However, the Province would be willing to work with an interested regional district to consider both the priority and the policy implications of this request. This process would have to be done in consultation with stakeholders such as other local governments and UBCM.