

## NORTH ISLAND COALITION WORKS TOGETHER TO END REGIONAL POWER OUTAGES

*Regional effort will explore alternative power supply opportunities to boost reliability*



*The Cape Scott Wind Farm produces clean energy for Vancouver Island communities and industries, yet when the North Island has power outages, local communities cannot access this local supply of clean electricity.*

COURTENAY, 31 August 2022 – Communities on Northern Vancouver Island are working together to mitigate the impact of power outages and stabilize back-up sources of supply, with funding support from Island Coastal Economic Trust's Investment Readiness Program.

The North Island Sustainable Power Coalition is made up of the communities of Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Port Alice, Alert Bay, the Regional District of Mount Waddington, and the 'Namgis, Quatsino, Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw and Kwakiutl First Nations. The Coalition has been meeting since mid-2021 after experiencing 29 power outages in a single year.

"We're seeing more and more weather-related power outages, and climate change will only exacerbate supply reliability," explains Coalition member and Port Hardy Mayor Dennis Dugas. "An intermittent and unreliable power supply fundamentally affects the security and safety of our economy and people."

## Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

This project aims to identify affordable, reliable sources of power to back-up the electrical grid. It will review existing production and storage capacity against load distribution and consumption and explore opportunities to modify or expand existing generating assets and develop new generation capabilities.

“It is unfortunate that communities the size of Port Hardy have had to spend over one million dollars installing backup generators to ensure that potable water and sanitary sewer services are maintained.” explains Dugas.

The Coalition identified concerns including residents with limited incomes where power outages can be life threatening. People who rely on CPAP machines, dialysis or oxygen need to have backup power to keep their health up or they may be at risk of adverse health affects. In terms of economic investment, the Coalition cites the lack of sustainable power across Northern Vancouver Island as affecting current businesses, stating “if we want to see advancement in economic opportunities, we need to provide sustainable power to support these opportunities.”

North Island power outages can last for hours or days and occur for a variety of reasons including weather-related events, and aging BC Hydro transmission and distribution equipment. There are power generating assets in the region that provide power to the BC Hydro grid however, when the grid is down, those assets are not able to generate and supply power.

“It’s inspiring to see this partnership of First Nations and local governments working to create a path for people across the North Island to have access to the wind and run-of-river energy being created locally in their region. This initiative shows us yet again how local leadership, regional partnerships, and the Trust are combining our efforts to build a more sustainable and resilient coastal economy,” stated Aaron Stone, Chair, Island Coastal Economic Trust.

The Analysis of Opportunities for Electrical Back up on the North Island is funded through the [Investment Readiness Program](#). The Trust will contribute \$12,500 to the total project cost of \$25,000. The project is expected to get underway shortly, with a December 2022 completion date.



Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

###

### About Island Coastal Economic Trust

Founded by the Province of British Columbia in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust works to build a sustainable and resilient coastal economy in reciprocal relationships with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution. Serving over half a million residents, we partner with communities in the development and financing of their economic infrastructure and diversification efforts through our unique structure that is led by, and accountable to, communities.

Since our inception, Island Coastal Economic Trust has approved more than \$55 million to economic development initiatives that have attracted over \$270 million in new investment to our region. These investments have created over 2,750 permanent jobs, and countless positive impacts, across the coast.

Island Coastal Economic Trust acknowledges that we work for communities across the ancestral and unceded territories of the Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuuchaanulth, Éy7á7juuthem, Ligwilda'xw, Pəntl'áč, shíshálh, Hul'q'umi'num', diitiiidʔaatx, SENĆOŦEN, Lekwungen, and T'Sou-ke speaking peoples.

### **Contact:**

[Brodie Guy](#), CEO

Island Coastal Economic Trust

250-871-7797