

Four Local Leaders Appointed to the Board of Island Coastal Economic Trust

Community leaders are steadfast in their vision for transformation of the Trust in 2023



Strait of Georgia

COURTENAY, 13 December 2022 – Island Coastal Economic Trust welcomes four coastal leaders to its Board of Directors and says farewell to outgoing members as the future of the region’s economic trust remains in balance.

The newly appointed board members were recently elected by their local government peers, comprised of all the local government leaders and MLAs from across the coast. The Trust’s new board members include Mayor Leonard Krog (Nanaimo), Mayor Silas White (Gibsons), Mayor Vickey Brown (Cumberland) and Sierra Acton, (Director, Cowichan Valley Regional District).

“We are excited to welcome our newest members, each of whom brings deep experience and knowledge to our governance and stewardship of the Trust,” says Board Chair Aaron Stone. “At this critical juncture in the future of our region’s only community-led and accountable trust – as we look towards transformation into a permanent, co-governance Trust between the First Nations and local government – the infusion of fresh perspectives, ideas and leadership is more crucial than ever before.”

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Since its formation by the Province of British Columbia, the Island Coastal Economic Trust has partnered with coastal communities to invest more than \$58 million into economic diversification, innovation, and revitalization efforts. This funding has been leveraged to attract more than \$250 million in additional new investment to the region. These funds have strengthened and diversified B.C.'s coastal economy, creating more than 2,750 permanent jobs and countless positive impacts across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast and surrounding islands and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution.

This year, the board and its regional advisory committees formed a new vision for intergenerational regional economic development. This new vision would focus on transforming Island Coastal Economic Trust into a sustainable, permanent Trust co-governed by First Nations and local governments. First Nations governments, local governments, and the Trust board are working in collaboration with the Province of British Columbia to invest in and realize the region's vision in 2023.

Despite having a strong foundation of success, the Trust finds itself at a critical juncture. The reality is that without new investment, the Trust must commence its dissolution process in 2023. This presents the very real possibility that the coastal region – and its more than 500,000 residents – will lose its sole regional trust at the very time communities have said they need it the most.

"This is a crucial time for the Trust, and I feel privileged to be on the board," says Mayor Silas White, a born and raised Sunshine Coaster, with a background in book publishing, housing, economic development and Indigenous relations. "We have a crucial role – particularly at this time – to show how widespread and impactful our Trust's investments have been and will continue to be for generations to come. As board members, our responsibilities extend well beyond our local communities as we work collectively on strategic regional and sustainable economic development."

As leaders of communities across the coast, the 13 board members (five of which are appointed by the Premier) are accountable to their local electorate and responsible for setting the organization's overall strategic vision across its coastal communities.

"As someone who's lived in the Village since the late 90s, I have seen firsthand how our community's economy has transitioned over the decades and how funding support through organizations like Island Coastal Economic Trust have been integral to this momentum," says Mayor Vickey Brown, a fourth generation Cumberlander.

The invaluable ground truthing, diverse perspectives, and community connection offered by board members play a critical role in ensuring the unique needs and values of communities are considered at the island-coastal region's only economic decision-making table.

"This is a particularly exciting time to be on the Trust board," says Sierra Acton, Director, Cowichan Valley Regional District. "We have made a strong case for investment for our region to transform the Trust into a permanent, co-governed, and sustainable financing organization serving our communities. In joining our Trust's board, I'm eager to continue building on the solid foundation of work that has strengthened the overall prosperity and wellbeing of all island and coastal communities."

"Economic Development and Reconciliation require ongoing work that can only be achieved with a permanent trust," says Mayor Leonard Krog, a native Vancouver Islander with deep roots in both

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community and government. "Given the significant numbers of First Nations in the region, surely this should be a priority if we are to walk the talk and bring prosperity to all our fellow citizens?"

As the four new board members join the governance team, the board of directors also recognizes the many contributions and leadership provided by five outgoing leaders, including Al Siebring (District of North Cowichan), Dana Thorne (Cowichan Tribes), Darnelda Siegers (Sechelt), Jesse Ketler (Comox Valley Regional District) and Lori Iannidinardo (Cowichan Valley Regional District).

"We feel incredibly fortunate to have had these leaders as key members of our governance team," says Board Chair Stone. "We are grateful for their relentless commitment, progressive vision and remarkable insight during their time with us, and we wish them well on their future endeavours."

The new members join current Board members: Aaron Stone, Mayor of Ladysmith (Chair); John Jack, Chair Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (Vice-Chair); Megan Hanacek, Provincial Appointee (Treasurer); Michelle Staples, Mayor of Duncan (Secretary); Martin Davis, Mayor of Tahsis; Barry O'Neill, Provincial Appointee; Roger Kishi, Provincial Appointee; John Elliott, Provincial Appointee.

Please visit our website for a full list of [Board](#) and [RAC members](#).

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[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 \$58 million to economic development initiatives that have attracted over \$308 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 Kwak'waka, Nuučaan' uł, Éy7á7juuthem, Ligwilda'xw, Pəntl'áç, shíshálh, Hul'q'umi'num', diitiid?aatx, SENĆOŦEN, Lekwungen, and T'Sou-ke speaking peoples.

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Island Coastal Economic Trust