

From: [susan gage](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: Biodiversity in local communities
Date: March-05-24 6:19:46 AM
Attachments: [Letter to Premier Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Premier of BC.pdf](#)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Esquimalt United Church Justice Team regarding biodiversity resolutions EB32 and NR38 that were passed at recent UBCM conventions. Thank you again for Esquimalt's leadership last spring in passing the resolution - Supporting Biodiversity in Local Communities, which led to the success of EB32 at UBCM.

Municipalities, Regional Districts and First Nations could benefit greatly from a dedicated fund and legislation to protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystem health as climate impacts rise. And so far, there haven't been any moves by the BC government to implement these resolutions.

The EUC Justice Team would be grateful if Council could direct the Mayor to write to the Premier to support the **Implementation of UBCM Resolutions EB32 and NR38: Establishment of a Local Natural Areas Protection Fund and Provincial Biodiversity Law**. Municipalities and regional districts across the province have been sending letters to the Premier requesting that the nature-based solutions presented in EB32 and NR38 become a reality (Sooke's letter is attached for reference).

Please find the following:

- [Draft template letter](#)
- [Talking points for drafting a customized letter](#)

To introduce this advocacy as a recommendation, please find the following:

- [Model Recommendation and Report: Advocacy for Provincial Action for Biodiversity](#)

Background

In September 2023, delegates at the UBCM annual convention voted in favour of Resolution EB32, calling on the Province to work with local governments and First Nations to "support the protection and restoration of biological diversity in local communities by establishing a Local Natural Areas Protection Fund and other legislative and promotional measures to support local efforts to acquire land for biodiversity and ecosystem health."

This built on delegates' adoption of Resolution NR38 at the 2022 UBCM convention, which called on the Province of British Columbia to develop "new legislation to protect and restore biological diversity and ecosystem health, in a manner consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and with the

involvement of local governments, civil society groups, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, scientists, and members of the public.”

In response to rising climate impacts, local, regional, and national governments around the world are supporting nature-based solutions to enhance their resilience. A dedicated fund and law to help to protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystem health is essential to implementing nature-based solutions to climate impacts. Suggested terms of reference for the fund can be found [here](#).

In the fall the BC government announced 1.1 billion dollars for conservation through the Nature Agreement, and it is important that municipalities, regional districts and First Nations have access to the funds they need for conservation goals, especially in light of rapidly increasing climate impacts.

I am hoping Council can direct the Mayor to write to the Premier to support the Implementation of UBCM Resolutions EB32 and NR38: Establishment of a Local Natural Areas Protection Fund and Provincial Biodiversity Law.

Sincerely,

Susan Gage
for the Esquimalt United Church Justice Team



File No. 0110-20

December 19, 2023

The Honourable David Eby, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9E1
premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier,

Re: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health

At its meeting on December 11, 2023, District of Sooke council passed the following motion:

“THAT Mayor Tait write Premier Eby (cc Ministers Heyman and Cullen, and MLA Parmar) stating renewed District of Sooke support for establishment of a Local Natural Areas Protection Fund and enactment of a provincial law for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health as per Resolutions EB32 and NR38 adopted at the 2023 and 2022 UBCM conventions respectively.”

This motion arose following a request from Sooke’s Michael Strong on behalf of Greater Victoria Acting Together and its membership, which includes Sierra Club BC, The Sisters of St. Ann, the BC Government Employees Union, Our Place Society, Camosun College Student Union, and The Mustard Seed.

As you are demonstrably well aware, Premier Eby, acting now to protect and restore biodiversity contributes to more resilient and healthy local communities – improving community health while securing the health of local waterways, watersheds, airsheds, and plant and animal species.

Action to protect and restore biodiversity also makes financial sense, helping to contain emergency management and infrastructure costs in the context of climate change.

Sooke Council would like to share its sincere appreciation to the Province of British Columbia for moving forward with establishment of the Conservation Financing Mechanism. This vital \$300-million initiative from the Province and the British Columbia Parks Foundation will fund new Indigenous-led conservation measures.



Council also wishes to restate its strong support for establishment of a Local Natural Areas Protection Fund and enactment of a provincial law for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health — consistent with Resolutions EB32-2023 and NR38-2022 adopted by Union of British Columbia Municipalities delegates.

To repeat what you know from other advocates, the benefits of a Local Natural Areas Protection fund would include:

- Supporting the “30 by 30” target of Canada, British Columbia and local communities arising from Canada’s commitments under the UN Convention on Biodiversity;
- Protecting biodiversity, wildlife habitat and ecosystem function, to keep our communities resilient and safe in the context of our changing climate;
- Expanding opportunities for low-impact outdoor recreation by residents and visitors, contributing toward public health and local economic development; and
- Creating a framework for partnership between the Province and local communities to protect the natural environment, leveraging local contributions and philanthropy with Provincial support.

In closing, we again express appreciation for you and your team’s leadership in establishing the Conservation Financing Mechanism. We encourage the Province to continue this critical work by establishing a Local Natural Areas Protection Fund and enacting the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Law with all due urgency.

We welcome an update on actions in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



Maja Tait
Mayor

cc. Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
Ravi Parmar, M.L.A., Langford-Juan de Fuca
Michael Strong, Greater Victoria Acting Together