

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT****IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

**Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should ensure that ship and freighter anchorages within the Gulf Islands, or within three miles of environmentally sensitive coastal sites, be required to undergo environmental impact assessments and to seek approval of affected neighbours and communities prior to receiving permission.

She said: Mr. Speaker, there are three themes I would like to address in speaking in support of my motion. I would like to go through them one at a time.

The need for community consultation and the responsible management of local environments is the primary focus of my comments today. The second theme, which I will return to later, is the environmental assessment process. My final theme concerns the ship and freighter anchorages within the Gulf Islands.

Two years ago I proposed that the Gulf Islands be considered as a designate for biosphere reserve status. While not well understood this UN program offers the planning and co-operative management approach which will involve public and private interests in determining working solutions to the problems before us.

Throughout my term as the member of Parliament for Saanich—Gulf Islands I have been seeking solutions to environment and development concerns in the Gulf Islands. This motion is yet another manifestation of my concern for these beautiful islands.

A bit of history might be helpful. Under the previous New Democratic provincial government led by my colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca the Islands Trust was established. This creation came out of the recognition by that provincial government of the unique qualities of the Gulf Islands, these magnificent jewels that lie between the metropolis of Vancouver and the fast-growing, larger island of Vancouver Island.

The mandate of the Islands Trust is to preserve and protect those islands. Twenty years after the creation of the Islands Trust the pressure on the islands has increased a hundredfold. However it is not just the islands, lands, that are under pressure but the water thoroughfares which surround them.

The first focus of my attention is the need for community consultation. I want to give a few examples of how this can go awry. I heard from a constituent just today that a situation that has been developing on North Pender Island for over a month has now come to a rather unhappy conclusion.

I see the Minister of Communications. He should pay attention to this particular point. This is a situation in which Cantel went over the heads of the local authority, of the Islands Trust, and obtained a building permit to build a communications tower on North Pender Island.

The capital regional district gave that building permit in error. It admits it was in error. There was an outcry from the residents of North Pender Island. There was no environmental assessment and no consultation with the Islands Trust. It completely overrode the Islands Trust on this issue.

• (1705 )

I have heard from one of my constituents that a licence has been granted to Rogers Cantel to make that tower operational. This is an outrage and it completely goes against our belief and faith in the system. The mandate of Islands Trust is to preserve and protect. The capital regional district issued the building permit in error. It admitted to that.

Despite protestations from many island residents and my intervention, the Minister of Communications has granted a temporary licence. This is a very David and Goliath kind of story. Sadly in this instance Goliath is going to win.

We know how well connected Rogers Cantel is. The people on North Pender Island do not have those kinds of connections. The tower is created on a hill and is part of a watershed. Water is a very scarce and valuable resource on the islands. The road up to the tower was built without due consideration of the environmental impact. There was no environmental assessment of this project.