Dear Mr. Neville:

Thank you for your letter of August 15, 2011, regarding BC Nature's resolution 2011-02 requesting provincial legislation to provide property tax incentives for those wishing to protect their own property from development. I apologize for the delay in responding.

Your resolution references British Columbia’s Natural Area Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP). A NAPTEP covenant differs from a Land Title Act covenant in that it has an application process and an explicit tax exemption of 65 per cent of the portion of the property protected by the NAPTEP covenant. NAPTEP has been introduced over most of the Islands Trust area and we are gaining experience with it. That program has not yet been subject to a comprehensive review.

I note that local governments at the recent Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) convention endorsed a Sunshine Coast Regional District resolution which called on the Province to grant local governments the authority to implement natural area protection tax exemption programs. The intention has always been to review the Islands Trust NAPTEP program before it is considered for expansion. Given other priorities at the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and at the Ministry of Finance, I do not expect that we will be able to do that in time for Budget 2012. However, by copy of this letter I will ask my colleague, the Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, to consider your resolution as she develops the provincial response to the UBCM resolution and develops her legislative agenda.

I would like to thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Kevin Falcon
Minister and Deputy Premier

cc: Honourable Ida Chong
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development