

Saanich Action for the Environment

c/o Peter & Susan Haddon

via email to: prhaddon@gmail.com

March 12, 2016

Mayor & Council

District of Saanich

via email to: council@saanich.ca

Dear Mayor & Councillors,

Re: SAFE 's Environmental Development Permit Area Position Paper

Saanich Action for the Environment (SAFE) is a group of Saanich residents who support fair and effective protection of our municipality's natural environment. SAFE members have no financial interest in developing and selling land. Our grass-roots organization is driven by a common concern for the long-term preservation of our municipality's green spaces, biodiversity and natural environment. Our membership includes landowners, qualified environmental and legal specialists and dedicated volunteers who have given their time to protecting and restoring ecosystems in Saanich.

The objective of SAFE is to support forward-thinking stewardship and protection of significant ecosystems on private and public land through the continuation of the Environmental Development Permit (EDPA) policy and bylaw, and through public education, consultation, research and amendment as appropriate.

SAFE members have listened carefully to the needs of others in our community to better inform themselves since Saanich started EDPA consultation and review in the spring of 2015. We have sought opportunities to contribute to the EDPA discussion by meeting with SCRES members, Saanich staff, Mr. Paul Rollo, Saanich Council members, and attending EDPA Open Houses. We have participated in EDPA Town Halls and contributed to Mr. Rollo's Economic Impact Study.

We recognize improvements to the bylaw are necessary, including the need to work more closely with landowners to restore and maintain the diversity of ecosystems throughout Saanich. Saanich's ecological health is a shared responsibility between the District of Saanich and its citizens. Maintaining and restoring ecological values on private land is part of the role citizens can play in the larger landscape of green infrastructure.

The public review process concluded on February 26, 2016 and, as of March 9, a preliminary Staff Report has been published. A further Saanich study of community feedback and the Economic Impact Study are pending. Nevertheless, Saanich Council appears to be pressing forward to make decisions on the future of the EDPA bylaw.

We remain hopeful that the public engagement process will strengthen the EDPA bylaw for 'the greater good' by careful consideration of improvements to the bylaw and program. We strongly encourage Council to wait for the results of the staff's public consultation review and Economic Impact Study and provide for further public consultation before finalizing such improvements.

SAFE's attached EDPA Position Paper is based on its members' collective experience, research, discussions, and examination of Saanich staff's report. It contains our recommendations for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ben Kerr	Susan Haddon
Lynn Husted	Carmel Thomson
Merie Beauchamp	Peter Haddon

Co-Chairs, Saanich Action for the Environment
District of Saanich