



ISLAND COASTAL ECONOMIC TRUST ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR UCLUELET AQUARIUM PROJECT

For Immediate Release

May 10, 2011

Gibsons, B.C. – Mayor Barry Janyk, Chair of the Island Coastal Economic Trust and Mayor of Gibsons, on behalf of the Board of Directors, today announced funding by the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) of \$515,000 for the Ucluelet Aquarium project. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$1.57 million dollars.

The project consists of the construction of a permanent, aquarium facility on the waterfront in downtown Ucluelet, British Columbia. This new facility will replace the highly successful temporary mini-aquarium which has been rated by Frommers Travel Guide as one of the top ten activities for families on Vancouver Island. The innovative design of this new facility will incorporate west coast aesthetic with unparalleled attention to animal health, energy efficiency and zero environmental impact.

The new facility, designed by an award winning architectural firm, will be built on pillars over the water and will feature spectacular marine viewing areas. Specimens will have continual contact with the ocean through an open, flow-through system and will be released after their time on display to fulfil their biological destinies. The absence of *behind the scenes* areas and a number of touch tanks will maximize the opportunities for close and personal contact with visitors, the collection and staff. In addition, the facility will also integrate lecture and seminar areas and serve as a training facility for future biologists, environmental professionals and the hospitality industry.

“The Island Coastal Economic Trust is really pleased to participate in the development of this innovative facility,” stated Barry Janyk, Chair of the Trust. “The project is yet another example of what the Province had in mind when it created the Trust - the opportunity for communities to develop visionary projects suiting their needs while allowing them the opportunity to be a part of the decision making process for the allocation of the Trust’s funds. Our Board lauds the Province for creating this model that supports projects like this, which serve to diversify the local economy and strengthen the region’s tourism infrastructure in harmony with local values, assets and goals.”

“I have watched with some surprise and considerable pride as the Ucluelet Aquarium has established itself as a significant component in our region’s tourism infrastructure. What started out an experiment in marine education is now perceived locally and beyond as vital to Ucluelet’s emerging tourism economy,” stated Ucluelet Aquarium Society President William Morrison. “Our innovative educational approach with visitors has attracted the attention of international guide books, travel magazines and television programs and we are now considered a *must see* attraction for visitors to Ucluelet, Tofino and Vancouver Island. We couldn’t have imagined a better outcome for our community and region,” concludes Morrison.

About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

The Island Coastal Economic Trust was established in February 2006 under an Act of the Province of British Columbia. It provided a \$50-million endowment that is managed by an independent Board of Directors comprised of thirteen members – eight Mayors and five provincial appointees from the prescribed area.

The Board’s mandate is to make strategic investments in economic development priorities including forestry, transportation, tourism, mining, energy, economic development, agriculture and aquaculture, and small business. The ICET region encompasses all Regional Districts and municipalities on Vancouver Island north of the Malahat as well as the Powell River and Sunshine Coast Regional Districts.

ICET has approved over \$42 million for over 70 projects on the Island and Sunshine Coast since starting its grant program in 2007. The total impact of these investments is estimated at over \$230 million.

A full overview of ICET can be found at www.islandcoastaltrust.ca

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