

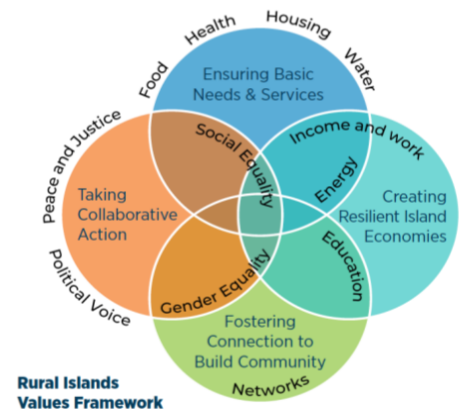
2023 RIEP Forum Resolutions

Building a Framework for Rural Islands Resilience

The 2023 Forum closed with the development of statements which would, as envisioned by RIEP organizers, meet the shared ideals of economic, ecological and social justice as expressed by [Doughnut Economics](#).

Forum participants were tasked with developing statements — ‘Resolutions’ — that would also support the Rural Islands Values Framework, identified during the 2022 Virtual RIEP Forum as a roadmap for realizing rural island “values in action” related to the following:

- Creating Resilient Local Economies
- Ensuring Basic Needs & Services
- Fostering Connections To Build Community
- Taking Collaborative Action



Lastly, as outcomes of the Forum, the Resolutions were intended to leverage efforts put towards the entire program—keynotes, interactive panels, showcases, networking activities, and most importantly, the Day 2 Action Labs focused on the following topics:

- Rural Housing Policy
- Climate Adaptation Practices
- Building Local Economic Capacity
- Travel as a Force for Good
- Circular Island Economies

The 2023 RIEP Forum Resolutions can serve to call upon any order of government — provincial, regional, local — and bodies such as non government organizations and the public, to understand and address the unique needs of BC’s rural island communities.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to share these working resolutions with 2023 Forum attendees and allies, and to gather interest in forming working groups to refine content and move forward with activation recommendations for next steps.

These Resolutions take the form of written statements which follow a common format: a title referencing one Forum Action Lab topic, one or more ‘Whereas’ clauses for context, and the Resolution text itself beginning with the phrase, “Therefore, be it resolved...”

Resolution 1: Rural Housing Policy

Whereas:

BC's Rural islands are experiencing 'crisis levels' problems related to housing that impact quality of life in our settler and Indigenous communities, as a result of:

- Unrepresentative age and income distribution of in-migration population segments (older & wealthier)
- High cost of real estate limiting ability of working family households to purchase property
- Loss of local businesses and key services due to lack of housing
- BC government is unaware of the crisis level of the lack of workforce housing for rural island communities
- RIEP is well-positioned to advocate to the Provincial government on behalf of BC's rural island communities..

Therefore, be it Resolved:

RIEP will lobby the Provincial government directly to establish a Rural Island Housing Authority in order to:

- Be a source of information to government government regarding rural island housing issues
- Be a voice an accepted and credible participant in government decision-making regarding affordable and non-market housing solutions for BC's rural islands.
- Work with government to advance 12 recommended actions on housing policy to the benefit of BC's rural island network

See the full list of [Rural Housing Policy recommendations here \(slide 8\)](#).

Resolution 2: Climate Adaptation & Mitigation

Whereas:

It is necessary to address the enormous challenge of cognitive dissonance related to climate change at all levels — from the individual to the corporate. Initiating true behavioral change to reduce individual, family and island GHG emissions requires a focused approach. Collectively, we can:

- Hold 121212 events on each island to capture people's hearts and minds
- Demonstrate and promote benefits of practical and adaptable solutions to climate change
- Initiate 'easy to do' actions that will build resilience in each Island the community

Therefore, be it Resolved:

Support from all orders of government is required to enable grass-roots actions on each island, including:

- Providing resources to create incentives for taking actions towards behavioural change, especially related to food production and distribution, and transportation
- Development and enactment of legislation and regulatory mechanisms to make climate action easier for individuals, families, and businesses.

Resolution 3: Rural Island Circular Economy

Whereas:

Given food insecurity experienced in our communities, and for the present and future health and resilience of BC's rural island network, it is essential to address the 'take-make-waste' streams of our regional food sector by adopting many successful strategies deployed in communities across the province:

- Support for CSA and local food programs
- Circular economy 'upskill' programs for labour force members
- Reduction in wasteful consumption practices in every community

Therefore, be it Resolved:

- Local and regional governments must be called upon to review policies and regulations related to food security, and ensure local growers and food producer practices directly support such strategies
- All orders of government and NGOs be called upon to fund, support, and help sustain local projects that contribute to circular economy practices and long-term sustainability of the rural island food sector
- Funds and resources be secured for a "Feeding People, Helping Farmers" program to support the development of accessible, ready-made food for each island (working model: Thetis Island Farm Trust)

Resolution 4: Shared Services to Build Economic Capacity (Resource)

Whereas:

BC's rural islands lack a centralized information resource about the business needs and capacities of participants in BC's rural island economies, and how those needs and capacities may overlap; a shared services framework would significantly improve economic health and resilience. Collectively, the islands can:

- Create a collaborative matchmaking platform for collecting, synchronizing and sharing information
- Structure and present the data through the lens of the Doughnut Economics model
- Support collective action on identifying evidence-based priorities for economic decision-making (ie. government policy and funding) on behalf of BC's rural islands

Therefore, be it Resolved:

RIEP take on the leadership role in securing buy-in to a shared services model for BC's rural island network by representatives members, including:

- Incubation and launch of a working group of stakeholders to build the requisite relationships,
- Communication of the initiative to the broader rural island network
- Acquisition of funds to develop a pilot project for the shared services platform.

Resolution 5: Shared Services to Build Economic Capacity (Process)

Whereas:

British Columbia's inhabited rural islands collectively represent 35,000+ constituents, including full-time and seasonal settler and Indigenous communities, who experience housing insecurity proportionate to the struggles experienced by all British Columbians; and

BC's rural island housing issues are compounded by the fractured nature of local and regional jurisdictional authority - over housing policies, investments, and provisioning - and that progress is thus compromised by a pace slowed by this disassociation; and

Timely, efficient and effective progress could be reasonably facilitated through coordination of this portfolio by an independent, non-governmental organization imbued with the authority provided by each constituent island member council, band, chamber of commerce, and/or economic development organization, to communicate and coordinate housing needs with affiliated regional district governments and the Ministry of Housing.

Therefore, be it Resolved:

That RIEP, in collaboration with island member organizations, be provided resources and authority by the Government of British Columbia to establish a "Rural Islands Housing Navigator" to act as a coordinating body for all groups, organizations, and collectives that are working towards the development of abundant non-market and market housing across BC's rural islands; and

That RIEP be provided resources to acquire, develop, and deploy the tools, education, best practices, and policy guidance and financial resources, to:

- Guide the housing policy development and implementation processes across BC's rural island network;

- Act as a repository of housing policy and development data and other evidence-based information;
- Reduce and mitigate the duplication of parallel efforts across the rural island regions; and
- Develop a comprehensive rural island housing strategy for British Columbia.

Resolution 6: Travel As A Force For Good

Whereas:

Travel to and between BC's rural islands to further tourism goals can be a force for good. To realize this goal we must ensure capacity limitations related to climate impacts are considered by means of:

- Attracting 'values aligned' visitors
- Setting visitor expectations via clear messaging about climate-related objectives and goals
- In collaboration with BC's Indigenous community councils and leaders, establish a rural island visitor pledge or 'code of conduct'
- Providing visitors a centralized, rural island-focused info hub/website

Therefore, be it Resolved:

BC's rural islands must individually and collectively:

- Work in collaboration with rural island residents, Indigenous communities with traditional and reserve lands on the islands and supporting organizations on tourism and travel-related strategies, to mitigate such impacts
- Engage with BC Ferries to help craft and amplify messaging to visitors and tour operators alike
- Build reciprocal relationships within the regional tourism sector and Indigenous tourism businesses
- Proactively manage related mitigation strategies related to visits and destination-focused activities

Resolution 7: Regional Economic Development for BC's Rural Islands

Whereas:

The long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on BC's rural island communities include:

- Changing demographics contributing to increasing social inequity
- Lack of economic diversification
- Insufficient resources to fully develop programs, products, and services that support all economic sectors

- Inadequate funding for rural island community economic capacity building within each regional district

A more hands-on and localized, strategic approach to strengthening and diversifying BC rural island economies is needed, and to achieve this goal, rural island community economic development organizations require professional, dedicated staff and stable funding to be able to adapt to changing circumstances, and to conduct a wide range of economic development initiatives to the benefit all economic sectors.

Therefore, be it Resolved:

RIEP call upon the Regional Districts serving rural island communities to fully fund a local Community Economic Development officer to serve the economic capacity building needs of rural island communities located in their regional districts.

Next Steps

These Resolutions will be subject to further refinement through a collaborative process. A RIEP Board member will co-lead an individual Resolution Working Group comprised of RIEP members, and other rural island stakeholders and allies to review, refine and prepare an activation plan.

If you would like to participate in the process, please contact RIEP:

info@ruralislandspartnership.ca