

The Qualicum Institute

A society for ecological, economic, and social sustainability

Date: November 18, 2011
To: Occupy Nanaimo Movement
From: Directors, the Qualicum Institute
Re: Sustainability and the Occupy Movement

The Qualicum Institute (QI) has much in common with the Occupy Movement. We recognize that our economic system creates vast disparities in wealth and considers the value of the environment simply as something that can be priced by the corporate marketplace. Integral to our vision is the need to create just distribution or equity of access to local and global resources. We believe that sustainable communities can only be achieved by transitioning to a steady state economy, one which is in balance with the carrying capacity of the ecosystems that sustain us.

Moving towards a sustainable economy and society should happen at the local level. With climate change and peak oil threatening, a first step would be determining the local carrying capacity of our region and adjusting our consumption of resources and discard of wastes accordingly. The second step would be becoming locally self-sufficient in providing for our basic needs: water, food, shelter, and energy. Transitioning to local self-sufficiency and a sustainable local economy would address many of the issues of social injustice and environmental degradation raised by the Occupy Movement.

The QI is a non-for-profit society, dedicated to helping citizens establish ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable communities specifically in the Regional District of Nanaimo and on Vancouver Island in general. As well, we recognize that achieving sustainability depends on the cooperation of the broader communities of Vancouver Island, the Province of BC, Canada and globally. Please note, we do not accept funding from corporations or government as this enables us to maintain internal control of our research and our communications.

We believe that human welfare relies upon resilient natural systems, their healthy, diverse organisms, and the ecosystem services they provide, such as raw materials, clean air and water, and productive oceans, soil, and forests. Humanity has a clear choice: to be sustainable or not. True sustainability means choosing to live in a just and equitable way that ensures the viability and subsistence of all living species and their places. This means maintaining all ecological processes so that the biological productivity of the Earth endures without dependence on non-renewable resources.

Society is living unsustainably because our choices and economic systems have adopted a model and culture that ignores nature's limits and the just distribution of the common wealth provided by nature. The symptoms of our unsustainable society include: climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, famine, and poverty.

Thank you for providing our Director, Roy Ostling, with the opportunity to speak at your next General Assembly, to describe our approach to sustainability. We encourage you to consider adopting our tenets as a framework for the Occupy Nanaimo movement. You can find them on our website www.qualicuminstitute.ca where you can also learn more about the QI, its mission, vision, and resources.