

November 1, 2020

Re: Aeriosa Letter of Support for the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Julia Taffe, I am resident of Ucluelet, located within traditional Yuułu?it?ath territory, and before that I was a resident of Tofino, in unceded λa?uukwii?ath territory, for eight years. I am the artistic director of Aeriosa Dance Society a non-profit, charitable dance production company, that I founded in Vancouver in 2005. We present annual and project-based public arts programming both in the City of Vancouver and within the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve communities.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to describe the importance of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust to my region, my community, my organization and myself personally. I have volunteered on the CBT Arts & Culture Committee since 2012 and participated in multi-disciplinary CBT super-committees from time to time.

I appreciate the invaluable work the CBT does bringing local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (and individuals) together in our region. CBT staff works to make sure that Indigenous volunteers are recruited and supported to participate on CBT committees, so that local Indigenous voices are consulted and represented throughout CBT programs and initiatives. I applaud the CBT for being receptive and accessible to the diverse communities that the biosphere encompasses. Our region is sprawling and remote, and the CBT is a vital conduit and connector linking our populations together in tangible and intangible ways. There are very few other local organizations as successful as the CBT at attracting local participation from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous volunteers.

I am very grateful that the CBT recognizes and supports our local arts and cultural sector through their annual Arts & Culture project grants, Discretionary Grants, Vital Grants and through their West Coast Nest educational tourism initiative. Some direct ways the CBT has assisted Aeriosa Dance Society include inviting our staff take part in governance and organizational capacity building workshops and partnering with our company to present a free community performance in the Pacific Rim National Park. Because the CBT is so widely and well respected, working alongside their staff and volunteer base has opened doors for Aeriosa to build relationships with Parks Canada and local governments organizations such as the Ahousaht Education Authority.

On a personal level, I trust I can always turn to CBT staff for advice and support in my roles as the leader of a small non-profit, community volunteer and passionate activist. Most recently, I have benefited from the Executive Director zoom check-ins that CBT has hosted throughout the current pandemic. These meetings give me the chance to find out how other local organizations and their non-profit leaders are managing in this difficult time and how we can support each other. CBT staff have always been ready to meet with me to learn about issues I encounter as performing artist based in a small remote community with few suitable venues for creating, teaching and performing. This personal form of support keeps me engaged and helps me stay committed to my dream for our collective local future; which is for the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve to become better known as a unique cultural and educational hub, where locals and visitors have access to many high-quality programs and activities instilling appreciation and respect for nature, creativity, sustainability, social justice and Indigenous rights.

I wholeheartedly believe the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust is an essential organization in our remote rural part of Vancouver Island. There is great risk and stress on our unique region at the moment. We need the CBT to continue bringing us together as we navigate the climate crisis, systemic racism, economic inequality, species extinction, over-tourism, food insecurity, Indigenous rights, and other issues. I am thankful that we have the designation of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, because of the leverage this distinct status provides to guide our sustainable and balanced vision for our community.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. If there is any further assistance I can provide, do not hesitate to get in touch, I would be pleased to be of service.

Yours Truly,



Julia Taffe, Artistic Director

Aeriosa Dance Society

Email: julia@aeriosa.com