

Paul Macgillivray
Acting Director General, Pacific Region
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Fax: 604-666-8956

Re: Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus involvement in the long term Fraser sockeye escapement planning initiative

March 9, 2004

Dear Paul Macgillivray:

The Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus (MCC) has attended four workshops and numerous Steering Committee meetings in support of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) long term Fraser sockeye escapement planning initiative.

The MCC provided DFO with details of our concerns in a letter to Paul Ryall following the fourth workshop (letter dated January 19, 2004, copied to you). As of the first of March 2004, DFO has not responded to this letter, nor have the issues raised been addressed. At the recent Steering Committee meeting it was made clear that the model would not attempt to address (taken verbatim from the modeling scenarios work plan):

- Value of learning about stock dynamics
- Benefit of large escapements
- Management costs
- Ecosystem benefits.

No other process to address these or other major issues raised has been identified, and for this reason, the MCC did not agree to the proposed work plan presented at the last Steering Committee meeting.

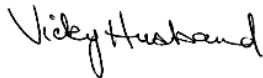
At the end of the day, models don't manage salmon. People manage salmon. The heart of modern fisheries management is the development of transparent decision-making processes with clear goals based on the best available science, and clearly articulated values. The heart of the Fraser sockeye escapement-planning initiative, on the other hand, is simply the development of a model which does not incorporate the latest developments in our understanding of stock dynamics and the critical role that salmon play in the ecosystems. Despite our best efforts it remains a very limited technical process. In addition, it remains unclear how DFO will use this tool and what sort of management structure you will build. We need to talk less about the sorts of tools the contractors need to bring to the job site, and more about what we intend to build when they get here, who's going to pay for it, who will get to enjoy it and why. This discussion has not even begun.

Perhaps technical tinkering is really all DFO fisheries managers can do without any guidance from a Wild Salmon Policy, or any clear direction from the Minister concerning the protection of weak or endangered stocks, or even such stocks as the endangered Cultus and Sakinaw sockeye populations. There also appears to be no linkage to the recovery planning processes currently being developed for Cultus and Sakinaw.

It is abundantly clear that action from the Minister concerning the listing of these endangered stocks under SARA and the release to the public of a draft Wild Salmon Policy is urgently needed.

Without an acceptable working draft of the WSP to guide the process, and a clear understanding of how the model will be used, how the management values of concern to the MCC will be explored, and how the tradeoffs inherent in developing a single objective function (to define the optimum harvest strategy) will be made, the MCC can no longer support the long term Fraser sockeye escapement planning initiative.

Sincerely,



Vicky Husband



Craig Orr

Co-chairs
Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus

cc:

Hon. Geoff Regan - Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Paul Sprout – Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Pat Chamut – Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Paul Ryall – Fisheries and Oceans Canada
John Fraser - Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council
Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus

Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus – Salmon Committee Members:

David Suzuki Foundation
Raincoast Conservation Society
Sierra Club of Canada – BC Chapter
Watershed Watch Salmon Society