

April 11, 2005

Hon. Geoff Regan
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Mr. Minister,

On behalf of the Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus (MCC), we are writing in regards to a prospective government announcement regarding commercial fisheries in B.C. Before any policy decisions are made relating to changes in fisheries management in BC such as the implementation of individual quotas or decisions on the recommendations of the Pearse-McRae report, the MCC insists that three minimum conditions must be met:

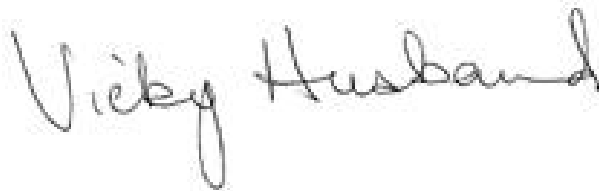
First, there must be substantive and meaningful consultation with the marine conservation community on any prospective changes or policy reform.

Second, implementation strategies related to policy changes must realistically consider and answer the questions about how these new policies will work for specific fisheries. For instance, DFO has yet to technically describe how individual quotas would work in the salmon fishery.

Third, DFO must conduct research on how these policy changes will improve conservation, and impact First Nations and communities. Such changes should be considered in light of other possible options, assessing the costs and benefits of alternatives. The research must be thorough and open to public review, including all scientific and socioeconomic data upon which analyses and decisions are made.

Before any policy decisions are taken, it is crucial that we can estimate the ecological, social and economic impacts of the changes and how they will be implemented. Furthermore, the marine conservation community in B.C. must have the opportunity to discuss these impacts and implementation strategies with DFO, First Nations and stakeholders prior to any policy announcements.

Best regards,



Craig Orr and Vicky Husband
Co-chairs, Marine Conservation Caucus

cc: Paul Sprout, DFO Regional Director General (Pacific)
Hon. Jack Austin, Senator, Leader of the Government in the Senate

Hon. Stephen Owen, Minister of Western Economic Diversification
Hon. John van Dongen, B.C. Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Hon. John Fraser, Chair, Pacific Fisheries Resources Conservation Council
B.C. Aboriginal Fisheries Commission
Coastal Community Network
Sports Fishing Advisory Board
UFAWU-CAW
WCVI Aquatic Management Board