

March 26, 2012

The Right Hon. Stephen Joseph Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Building
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

Re. Potential amendments to section 35 of the *Fisheries Act*

The Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus (PMCC) echoes the concerns of a large number of Canadians who strongly oppose the removal, or weakening, of habitat provisions in the *Fisheries Act*. Numerous negative opinions have been publicly voiced recently in regards to this issue (see appendix below).

Taking habitat protection out of the *Fisheries Act* would be a betrayal to the interests of Canadians, both because so many depend on fish but also because we all depend on clean water that the *Fisheries Act* helps protect. Recent polls have shown that a majority of Canadians place an extremely high value on wild salmon, and furthermore, believe that more—not less—must be done to protect salmon and salmon habitat. Sacrificing fish habitat in an attempt to expedite development for some large industries is short-sighted and dismisses the values of many Canadians.

The PMCC concurs with the concerns of the 625 scientists who recently urged you to abandon any initiative that would jeopardize many important fish stocks and the lakes, estuaries and rivers that support them. We agree that the weakening of habitat protections in section 35 of the *Fisheries Act* will negatively impact water quality and fisheries across the country, and could undermine Canada's international credibility on environmental protection.

The PMCC also agrees with the scientists and Canadians who urge you to make changes based only on the best science and only after appropriate consultations with affected citizens.

In summary, weakening the habitat protection provisions of the *Fisheries Act* would be a most unwise action, which would jeopardize a national treasure, and seriously compromise trust in government.

Sincerely,



Craig Orr, Ph.D., PMCC Chair
On behalf of the Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus

Cc. Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Honourable John Duncan, MP Vancouver Island North, BC
Honourable James Moore, MP Port Moody, Westwood, Port Coquitlam, BC
Honourable Joe Oliver, MP Eglinton, Lawrence, ON
Randy Kamp, MP Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Mission, BC
John Weston, MP West Vancouver, Sunshine Coast, Sea to Sky Country, BC
Elizabeth May, MP Saanich, Gulf Islands, BC
Fin Donnelly, MP New Westminster, Coquitlam, BC
Nigel Wright, PMO Chief of Staff
Derek Vanstone, Deputy of Chief of Staff
Chris Woodcock, Issues Management Director
Julie Gaudreau, Senior Advisor, Stakeholder Relations
Raymond Novak, Principal Secretary
Shaun Webb, Stakeholder Relations for British Columbia

Appendix: Negative letters, online media, and petitions in regards to alleged changes to *Fisheries Act*

Letters

March 14, 2012 letter from Trout Unlimited Canada

http://www.mccpacific.org/fisheriesact/TroutUnlimited-FisheriesAct-Mar14_2012.pdf

March 15, 2012 letter from the BC Wildlife Federation

http://www.mccpacific.org/fisheriesact/BCWF-FisheriesAct-Mar15_2012.pdf

March 19, 2012 letter from the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution

http://www.mccpacific.org/fisheriesact/CSEE-FisheriesAct-Mar19_2012.pdf

March 20, 2012 letter from the CNGO Collaborative n Fish Habitat Management

http://www.mccpacific.org/fisheriesact/CNGO-FisheriesAct-Mar20_2012.pdf

March 20, 2012 letter from Canadian Aquatic Resources Section and the American Fisheries Society

http://www.mccpacific.org/fisheriesact/AFS-CARS-FisheriesAct-Mar20_2012.pdf

March 22, 2012 letter from over 600 scientists

http://www.mccpacific.org/fisheriesact/CanadianScientists-FisheriesAct-Mar22_2012.pdf

March 25, 2012 letter from the Association of Professional Biology

http://www.mccpacific.org/fisheriesact/APB-FisheriesAct-Mar25_2012.pdf

Media

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<http://www.burnabynow.com/technology/Scientists+rally+save+fish+habitat/6347579/story.html> Scientists rally to save fish habitat, Jennifer Moreau, Burnaby Now, March 23, 2012

<http://www.vancouversun.com/technology/Scientists+pressure+over+Fisheries/6347453/story.html> Scientists pressure PM over Fisheries Act, Vancouver Sun, Peter O'Neil, March 23, 2012

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<http://www.canada.com/Ducking+Duncan+criticized+being/6347160/story.html> Ducking Duncan being criticized for being M.I.A., Campbell River Courier Islander, Dan MacLennan, March 23, 2012

<http://www.thetelegram.com/News/Local/2012-03-23/article-2937465/Opposition-grows-to-possible-Fisheries-Act-changes/1> Opposition grows to possible Fisheries Act changes, The Telegram, Ashley Fitzpatrick, March 23, 2012

<http://www.canada.com/Leave+Section+alone/6347168/story.html> Leave Section 35 alone, Postmedia News, Haig Brown Institute, March 23, 2012

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Petitions

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