

PACIFIC MARINE CONSERVATION CAUCUS

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April 30, 2012

The Honourable Keith Ashfield, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Honourable Minister,

Re: Consultation with the Marine Conservation Caucus on changes to the *Fisheries Act*

The Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus (MCC) requests a meeting with you and your staff to discuss the changes you announced on April 24 on habitat protection measures and commitments under *Canada's Fisheries Act*.

You previously met with members of the MCC, so we don't need to remind you that the MCC was established by formal agreement with your Ministry as the "official" consultative body of marine and wild salmon conservation interests in the Pacific Region.

The MCC has diligently attempted to uphold its commitments to this consultation agreement for the past decade. As you might imagine, proposed changes to the *Fisheries Act*—which remain unclear to us as to detail, scope, and potential conservation and fiduciary implications—are of keen interest to BC's marine and salmon conservation community.

Though your announcement admirably purports to commit Canada to the "responsible protection and conservation of Canada's fisheries," it is acutely short on details that would provide us context on that commitment. The MCC also notes you stated "We have been clear that the current rules governing the protection of fish habitat are indiscriminate and unfocused and do not reflect the priorities of Canadians," and seeks clarity on what your ministry deems indiscriminate and, equally important, what you consider to be the priorities of Canadians. A recent Angus Reid poll showed that an overwhelming majority of British Columbians say small salmon runs should not be traded off to favour the commercial fishing industry and economic development should not come at the expense of salmon habitat. We would be pleased to share with you further details of this poll.

The MCC would appreciate your staff arranging a meeting at the earliest convenient date so that we can better understand and provide our advice on the changes announced.

Sincerely,

Craig Orr, Watershed Watch Salmon Society, MCC Chair

John Werring, David Suzuki Foundation

Will Soltau, Living Oceans Society

ZoAnn Morten, Pacific Streamkeepers Federation

Misty MacDuffee, Raincoast Conservation Foundation

Greg Knox, Skeena Wild Conservation Trust

Poul Bech, Steelhead Society of British Columbia

Ernie Cooper, World Wildlife Fund Canada

Cc: Claire Dansereau, Deputy Minister, DFO

Sue Farlinger, Regional Director General, Pacific Region, DFO

Randy Kamp, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister, DFO

Dan Cody, Pacific Region Advisor to the Minister, DFO