

## Mussel meeting demanded

By Vernon Morning Star

Published: **August 08, 2014 01:00 PM**

Updated: **August 08, 2014 01:301 PM**

Frustration is growing over the perceived lack of action by senior government on invasive mussels.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board is demanding a meeting with Environment Minister Mary Polack to discuss the need for inspection stations to ensure quagga and zebra mussels don't get into local lakes.

"We have been sounding the alarm for two years now, warning of the threat invasive zebra and quagga mussels pose to the Okanagan and elsewhere," said Doug Findlater, chairperson.

"Our research indicates the cost could be more than \$43 million a year to just manage this problem. And while we have launched our Don't Move a Mussel campaign to raise awareness, and promoted the outreach of others and the Clean, Drain, Dry message, we need concrete action. The only organizations in a position to do this effectively are the provincial and federal government."

In December, the provincial government brought in legislation banning the movement of the mussels, dead or alive, but Findlater says there's still no enforcement.

OBWB has been urging the province to bring in inspection stations, similar to self-funded U.S. boater-pay sticker programs.

The board has also been calling on the federal government to pass pending legislation allowing Canada Border Services agents to stop and inspect boats coming into Canada.

OBWB has also learned that Alberta has now established inspection stations on four major routes entering that province along its south and east borders.

So far this year, inspectors have intercepted eight mussel-infected boats, all headed for the Calgary and Edmonton areas. Alberta estimates the cost of an invasive-mussel infestation in that province would be \$75 million a year.

"Action by our province is not dependent on the federal government acting," said Findlater.

"Alberta didn't wait for the federal legislation. They moved quickly to protect their lakes and we should do the same. They get it. It's a serious threat and they've invested money in helping protect themselves. B.C. needs to do the same."

### Find this article at:

<http://www.vernonmorningstar.com/news/270518901.html>