

Hon. Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

Linda Lizotte-MacPherson
President of CBSA

Roslyn H. MacVicar
Regional Director General, CBSA, Pacific Region

Kim R. Scoville
Regional Director General, CBSA, Prairie Region

May 24, 2016

Re: Urgent need to prevent invasive mussels from entering Pacific Northwest

Dear Minister Goodale,

Thank you for your April 07 reply to our January 11 letter regarding the urgent need to prevent invasive mussels from entering the Pacific Northwest. Since April 1st, the British Columbia Conservation Officer Service has been providing inter-provincial inspections for boats coming from across Canada, which in some cases, have originated in the United States. Between April 1st and May 3rd, 1,225 boats were inspected, 64 of which were deemed to be “high-risk,” and four of which were found to be carrying invasive mussels. These stations do not operate 24 hours a day.

While we acknowledge the significant action taken by CBSA in cooperating with the B.C. Ministry of Environment, we remain highly concerned that not all points of entry (POEs) place the same priority on stopping a potential infestation of invasive mussels. As stated in your correspondence, currently Border Service Officers have only received mussel inspection training at “several high-risk” points of entry. We recognize that the focus of the CBSA has traditionally been to prevent drugs, criminals, and firearms from illegally entering Canada. However, the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive mussels also represents a major, long-term environmental and economic threat, which should be given an equivalent level of prevention effort at all prairie and Pacific POEs. Given that a single infested watercraft could be responsible for \$45 million per year of economic damage to the Okanagan alone, it is not sufficient to monitor some POEs, while others allow boats through without following an inspection protocol.

We call for all POE Chiefs of Operations to require mandatory enforcement of the Aquatic Invasive Species regulations through the use of the Uniform Minimum Protocols for Watercraft Interception Programs. In approximately 95% of cases, this would simply require a standard screening interview and short visual inspection to determine that the boat is not considered high-risk. The small amount of extra time taken to conduct these interviews is more than justified if even one infested boat is prevented from entering our waters.

We also call on the federal government to provide funding to the prairie provinces and British Columbia to help contain the current infestations in Manitoba’s Lake Winnipeg and Cedar Lake, and to prevent the introduction of invasive mussels in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. In the U.S., the federal

government has recently provided \$4 million in matching prevention funding to the northwestern states, and we call on the Government of Canada to match or exceed that commitment to the provinces.

We urge you to make this issue a priority in your Ministry, and to continue to improve the prevention regime.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Findlater".

Doug Findlater, Chair
Okanagan Basin Water Board

CC:

- Hon. Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P. Minister of Transport
- Hon. Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P. Minister of Environment and Climate Change
- Hon. Hunter Tootoo, P.C., M.P. Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
- Okanagan MPs: Stephen Fuhr, Dan Albas, Mel Arnold, Richard Cannings;
- Federal Critics: Hon. Erin O'Toole, Kelly Block, Mark Strahl, Hon Ed Fast;
- Okanagan MLAs: Hon. Christy Clark, Hon. Steve Thomson, Hon. Norm Letnick, Eric Foster, Dan Ashton, Linda Larson, Jackie Tegart, Greg Kylo;
- Regional District Chairs for North Okanagan, Central Okanagan, and Okanagan-Similkameen;
- Okanagan Municipalities;
- Chiefs Executive Council, Okanagan Nation Alliance;
- Matt Morrison, Chief Executive Officer, Pacific NorthWest Economic Region;
- Gail Wallin, Executive Director, Invasive Species Council of B.C.