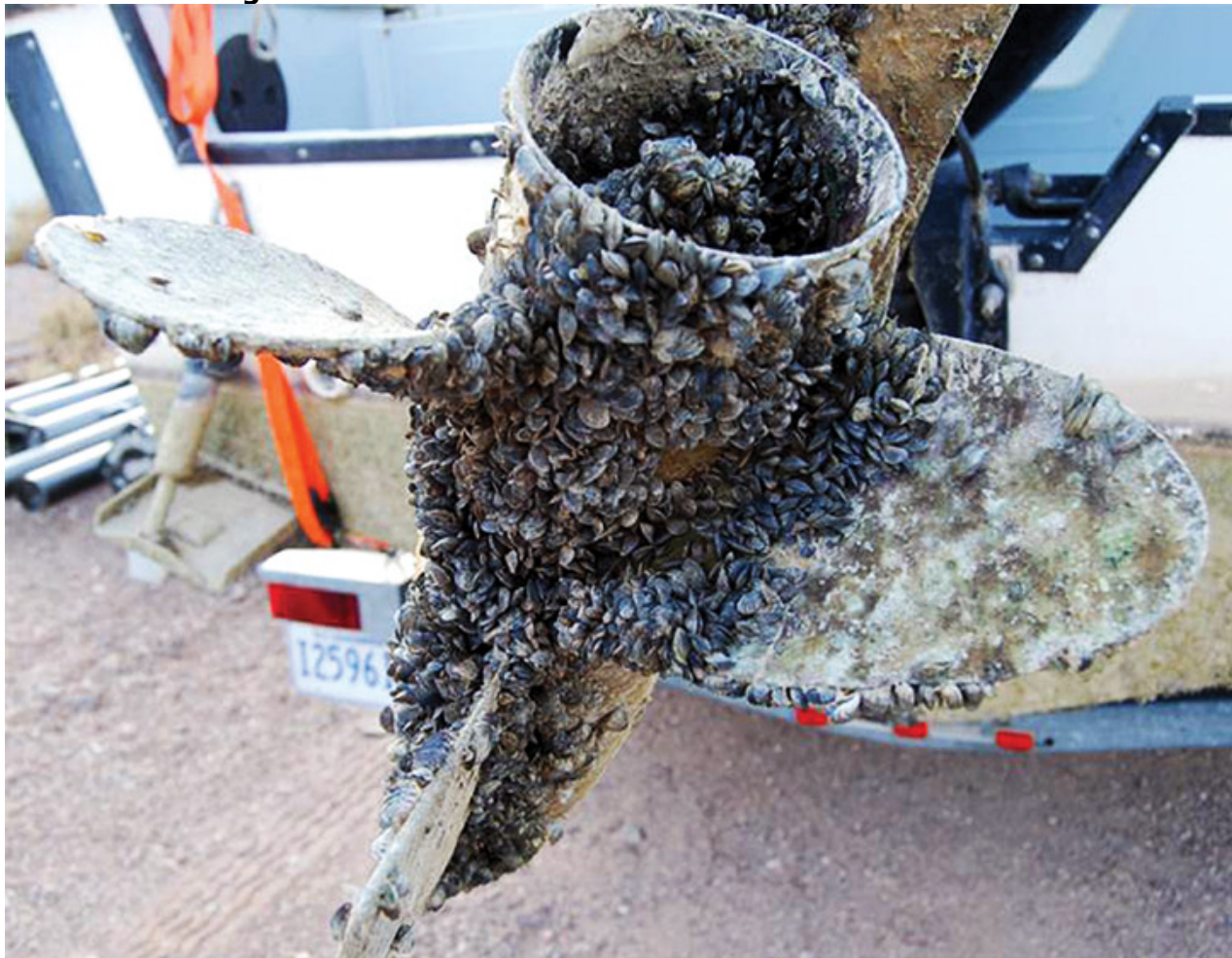


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Council encourages action on mussels



By Sicamous Eagle Valley News

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Sicamous council is encouraging B.C.'s environment ministry to put some muscle into protecting local lakes from invasive mussels.

Council recently received a copy of a letter from the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) addressed to Premier Christy Clark and her environment minister Mary Polak, urging action to prevent invasive zebra and quagga mussels from entering the province. The board states the mussels could irrevocably harm the province, and have a negative impact on water intakes, outfalls, boats and docks. The letter then refers to a March 12 incident where a Canadian border official noticed invasive mussels on the hull of a boat from the U.S. that was supposed to be launched in Okanagan Lake. While the vessel was decontaminated, the board states there is currently no federal legislation preventing a mussel-infested boat from entering Canada, and a provincial plan for preventing invasive mussels has not yet been complete.

Coun. Fred Busch said council should share OBWB's concern, and agreed action is needed from both the provincial and federal governments.

"I think if you have these zebra mussels, all of a sudden our water intakes and also our storm sewer outfalls become clogged with these mussels and that would certainly cause us a great deal of expense having all of those redeveloped," said Busch.

Busch recommended that council write a letter to the minister. Coun. Joan Thomson agreed, sharing his concern.

"The milfoil came into this lake and they still can't get rid of it," said Thomson. "If these mussels come in, they're going to be twice as bad... so I really agree we need to get somebody doing something about it."

Council agreed to send a letter to the province.