

opinion

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

New measures to fight AIS

Several constituents, led by the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB)'s "Don't Move a Mussel" campaign, have written to me asking the federal government to move forward with the provinces and territories to ensure our lakes and waterways are protected from aquatic invasive species (AIS).

On Friday, Dec. 5, I was pleased to join a roundtable discussion alongside my colleague MP Dan Albas and other stakeholders, including Tourism Kelowna, at the Kelowna Yacht Club to report that our government, under Fisheries and Oceans Minister Gail Shea, has taken new proposed regulations in place to fight against aquatic invasive species.

The proposed regulations are a result of close consultation with provincial and territorial governments.

As required, on Dec. 6,



MP's REPORT
Ron Cannan

the proposed AIS regulations were published in the Canada Gazette, Part I to allow for a 30-day public comment period. More information can be found at www.gazette.gc.ca under the Saturday, Dec. 6 edition.

The Government of Canada takes the issue of aquatic invasive species very seriously and is committed to preventing the introduction, spread and establishment of AIS in Canadian waters.

The federal government invests over \$14 million annually to address the issue of aquatic

invasive species, thereby fostering healthy, safe and sustainable Canadian waters.

The proposed regulations address gaps in the current Canadian regulatory framework by providing a comprehensive set of provisions and authorities that would improve the ability to prevent the intentional or unintentional introduction, respond to invasions, and manage the spread of AIS, while protecting Canada's aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity.

This will help prevent incurring costs associated with the establishment of invasive species, including impacts on fishing and aquaculture activities, recreation and tourism-related activities, and infrastructure.

These new regulatory provisions would also address enforcement. Current regulations can be enforced by provincial Enforcement Officers but now Canadian Bor-

der Services Agency officers will also have the ability to enforce prohibitions against import at the Canadian border such as ordering a vessel back to a US washing station before allowing it to enter Canada.

Aquatic invasive species pose a significant and growing threat to British Columbia and that is why it is so important that we work towards a coordinated and comprehensive approach that will safeguard our lakes, rivers and coastal waters, including Okanagan Lake.

Dr. Anna Sears, Executive Director of the OBWB, has already publicly stated that the proposed rules appear to be just what the OBWB is looking for.

Nancy Cameron of Tourism Kelowna and Tom Dyas of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce have also shared their enthusiastic sup-

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