



Invasive mussels have encrusted this boat hull. (Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society photo)

North Okanagan-Shuswap MP says feds must act to stop aquatic invaders

New report shows not enough being done to stop species like Quagga mussels

Jun. 22, 2019 12:00 a.m. / [NEWS](#)



A report tabled recently in the House of Commons has found the federal government's protections of Canadian lakes and waterways against aquatic invasive species are inadequate, says North Okanagan-Shuswap MP Mel Arnold.

[The report](#) also contains recommendations directing the federal government to undertake immediate action to protect Canadian waters from aquatic invasive species.

From the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, the report follows a study initiated by Arnold last November.

During the study, the committee received testimony from individuals and organizations from across Canada including the Okanagan Basin Water Board, Columbia-Shuswap Invasive Species Council, Shuswap Watershed Council and Invasive Species Council of BC.

"This report provides important input for the fight against aquatic invasive species across Canada," said Arnold.

"The committee heard from Canadians on the front line of the fight against invasive species, including those in the North Okanagan-Shuswap, who successfully conveyed to the committee the acute need for stronger resources and coordination of efforts to protect of our lakes and waterways."

While the annual cost of managing invasive mussels in Ontario alone is an estimated \$100 million annually, a 2013 study by the OBWB estimated an infestation in the Okanagan would cost \$43 million annually just to manage.

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The cost of preventing such infestations are much lower than managing invasive species after they're introduced, and the parliamentary report's recommendations reflect the need for stronger prevention efforts and resources.

"The ecological and economic harms of invasive species like zebra mussels are undisputed, no one is debating the devastation they cause, so our focus must be the timely implementation of measures proven to work," said Arnold.

"Responses I have been receiving from ministers of Fisheries and Oceans over the past three years to concerns I've raised regarding these threats have been unsatisfactory, which is why this study was necessary and I sincerely hope some of our recommendations will be implemented in time for the peak tourist season when thousands of boats will be arriving in our region."



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