

Province of British Columbia
Offices of the Premier and of the Minister of Environment
Sent by e-mail to premier@gov.bc.ca and env.minister@gov.bc.ca

5 January 2017

Re: Invasive Mussel Prevention Program in 2017

Dear Honourable Premier Clark and Honourable Minister Polak, Minister of Environment:

I am writing on behalf of the Shuswap Watershed Council to express our concern about the threat that aquatic invasive mussels pose to Shuswap Lake.

The Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) is a collaborative partnership of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, District of Sicamous, City of Salmon Arm, Regional District of North Okanagan, Secwepemc Nation, and the BC Ministries of Environment and Agriculture. Its mandate is to enhance water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap watershed. At the most recent SWC meeting held on December 8th 2016 in Salmon Arm, Ms. Martina Beck, Invasive Mussels Program Coordinator for the BC Ministry of Environment, was in attendance and gave an informative presentation. The potential ecological and economic impacts of zebra and quagga mussels – conservatively estimated to cost \$43M annually to British Columbians – are staggering. It was a relief to hear directly from Ms. Beck that BC remains mussel-free at this time. This seems to be due in part to the efforts of the BC MOE's Invasive Mussel Prevention Program and its many partners, and the cooperation of travellers into BC.

We know that prevention is key. We appreciate the increased efforts in 2016 from the 2015 pilot season, and we are very hopeful that the BC MOE will again amplify its efforts on roadside inspections and decontamination of watercrafts, education and outreach to the boating community, and early detection monitoring. We ask that you would consider the merits of establishing mandatory inspection of watercrafts at all major highway entry points to BC.

We also request that opportunities be pursued to entreat the Provinces of Ontario and Manitoba to contain aquatic invasive mussels within their jurisdictions. In 2016, 82% and 6% of mussel-fouled boats entering BC were found to be from Ontario and Manitoba, respectively.

Thank you in advance for your ongoing efforts to keep BC waters mussel-free.

Kind regards,

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Area 'C' Director, Columbia Shuswap Regional District
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Cc:

Hon. Minister Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Greg Kylo, MLA Shuswap

Mel Arnold, MP North Okanagan – Shuswap

Rhona Martin, Chair, Columbia Shuswap Regional District

John Ranta, Chair, Thompson-Nicola Regional District

Bob Fleming, Chair, Regional District of North Okanagan

Nancy Cooper, Mayor, City of Salmon Arm

Terry Rysz, Mayor, District of Sicamous

Paul Michel, Chief, Adams Lake Indian Band

Judy Wilson, Chief, Neskonlith Indian Band

Oliver Arnouse, Chief, Little Shuswap Lake Indian Band

Wayne Christian, Chief, Splatshin Indian Band

Brian Heise, Chair, Invasive Species Council of British Columbia

Hamish Kassa, Chair, Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society