



COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT

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December 4, 2023

Sent by email:

- Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca
- Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health Mark.Holland@parl.gc.ca
- Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Minister of Tourism Soraya.MartinezFerrada@parl.gc.ca
- Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Finance FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca
- Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca
- Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport TAC.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Ministers:

Re: Measures and Resources Needed to Prevent an Invasion of Zebra or Quagga Mussels in BC

On behalf of the CSR D Board of Directors, I am writing to convey our concern over a matter that our Board has frequently discussed - a potential invasion of Zebra or Quagga Mussels (ZQM). We urgently request your Ministry's call-to-action and leadership in protecting and safeguarding the water resources in our region.

During the November 16, 2023 CSR D Board meeting, Directors reviewed a letter submitted by the Shuswap Watershed Council. The following resolution was a result of the discussion: the Board write a letter bringing awareness to the prevention of an invasion of Zebra or Quagga mussels in BC and that the letter be sent to the Provincial and Federal Ministers and copied to local regional districts and agencies asking for their support to have all crossings monitored.

The spread of ZQM in BC would have a devastating and irreversible impact to BC's economy; prevention is viewed as the best and most cost-effective option. Should an infestation spread to our local lakes, it would be disastrous for the Southern Interior region of BC, which is a popular tourist destination. As the Shuswap Watershed Council expressed in their November 2, 2023 letter to the Province, that aside from extremely negative effects to the tourism industry, there are serious concerns regarding the damage to local government infrastructure. This includes potential damage to hydro-electric facilities, water utilities and intakes, irrigation infrastructure and food production, in addition to losses to the tourism industry and property values, should an aquatic invasive mussel infestation occur in BC.

A ZQM infestation would not only have a significant negative economic impact, but it would also have far-reaching consequences on tourists and property owners. The lake ecosystem and the pleasure that locals and visitors alike gain from the lakes cannot be quantified in monetary terms.

With respect to proactively preventing the spread of mussels in BC, without unfavourable and significant impact to the tourism industry or local infrastructure, we ask for your support to have all crossings into BC monitored.

ELECTORAL AREAS

A GOLDEN-COLUMBIA
B REVELSTOKE-COLUMBIA

C EAGLE BAY-WHITE LAKE-TAPPEN
D FALKLAND-SALMON VALLEY

E SICAMOUS-MALAKWA
F NORTH SHUSWAP-SEYMOUR ARM
G BLIND BAY-SORRENTO-NOTCH HILL

MUNICIPALITIES

GOLDEN
REVELSTOKE

SALMON ARM
SICAMOUS

Meaningful Provincial involvement is necessary and requires the involvement of Provincial staff with decision-making, compliance, and enforcement authorities. We ask that the Province commit statutory decision-makers and executive-level staff to collaboratively address cross-jurisdictional issues which impact the health of the province's water systems.

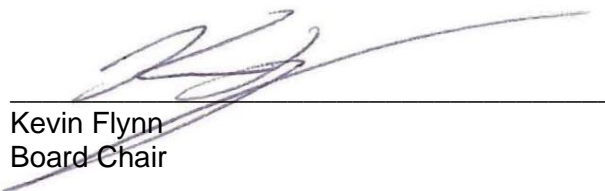
Given the urgency of the situation, the CSRD wants to ensure an ongoing coordinated response and trust our request for funding is seriously considered and that continuous coordinated actions between the government, regional districts and municipalities in BC are implemented.

We look forward to collaborating with you to protect BC's waters from invasive mussels.

Yours truly,

COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT

Per:



Kevin Flynn
Board Chair

KF/jf

cc: Shuswap MLA Greg Kylo
North Okanagan Shuswap MP Mel Arnold
Adams Lake Indian Band
Skwlāx te Secwepemcúłecw
Neskonlith Indian Band
Splatsin
City of Salmon Arm
District of Sicamous
Shuswap Watershed Council
Okanagan Basin Water Board
Columbia Basin Trust
Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
Thompson-Nicola Regional District
Regional District North Okanagan
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Regional District Central Okanagan
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
Shuswap Chambers of Commerce: Salmon Arm, Sicamous, South Shuswap, North Shuswap