



JAN 29 2018

Mr. Eddie Gardner
President
Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance
< singingbear@telus.net >

Dear Mr. Gardner:

Thank you for your correspondence of November 21, 2017 regarding the protection of wild fish. I acknowledge that the issues at hand are complex. Like you, I am committed to protecting wild salmon.

I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the reasons for Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO's) proposed amendments to the *Fishery Regulations*. In 2010, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) amended its *Health of Animals Regulations* and *Reportable Diseases Regulations* to enable the implementation of the National Aquatic Animal Health Program (NAAHP). These amendments provide the CFIA with a streamlined regulatory framework for managing fish-related disease risks. Under the *Health of Animals Act* and supporting regulations, CFIA is responsible for preventing the introduction and spread of significant diseases in both wild and cultured aquatic animals.

The CFIA changes introduced some program overlap with DFO's present management of fish health under section 56 of the *Fishery Regulations*; our proposed amendments to the *Fishery Regulations* aim to reduce this duplication. DFO will continue to provide diagnostic and laboratory support to the CFIA and the NAAHP.

In addition, DFO is investing significant resources to improve our understanding of piscine reovirus (PRV) and its relationship to heart and skeletal muscle inflammation (HSMI). I also note that DFO has complied with and implemented Justice Rennie's 2015 order. Ecojustice, counsel for Ms. Alexandra Morton, agrees.

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DFO will continue to work with First Nations, the Province of British Columbia, industry and other partners to ensure that potential risks to wild fish stocks and ecosystems are identified and appropriately managed. In that context, senior Pacific Region staff are participating in an initial meeting with the Province of British Columbia and First Nations in the Broughton Archipelago to discuss First Nations' concerns.

Close collaboration between the Department and Indigenous peoples is essential to achieving reconciliation, and the Government of Canada's commitment in this regard is detailed in the Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

I hope that the information provided clarifies Fisheries and Oceans Canada's position on this matter. Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. LeBlanc', written in a cursive style.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard