



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Alistair MacGregor

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT - COWICHAN-MALAHAT-LANGFORD

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February 26, 2024

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier,
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Lebouthillier,

We write to you on behalf of several Vancouver Island coastal communities, including Port Renfrew, regarding protection efforts for vital species such as the Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) and wild pacific salmon and the closure of Tidal Area 20 by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Those out on the water have firsthand knowledge of the marine ecosystems that surround Vancouver Island, yet they are largely being left out in DFO's decision-making process.

As such, the Sport Fishery Advisory Committee has shared concerns surrounding this closure. The proposed closures of commercial and recreational salmon fishing being proposed in sub-areas 20-4 and 20-5 would be detrimental to sport fishers eliminating an existing corridor to the offshore boundary resulting in small to medium sized fishing boats having to travel longer distances, through rough open waters. Evidently, this would create increased safety concerns and increased time and resources.

To make matters worse, this decision will negatively impact tourism revenue necessary to so many in rural communities. Many reservations made by sport fishers, for example, at marinas, campgrounds, and local accommodations have been made months ago. The cancellations that would result from this potential closure would result in lost revenue for the community at a time when so many are already struggling to make ends meet with the high cost of living.

This potential closure will have detrimental impacts to many who rely on sport fishing for their livelihoods, yet the Sport Fishing Advisory Committee has not been meaningfully consulted causing unnecessary strain on Sport Fishers and coastal communities. Again, the protection of the Southern Residential Killer Whale and wild pacific salmon is of utmost importance to everyone involved. And those on the water have local knowledge necessary in developing effective solutions.

A timely and clear plan is necessary to ensure these vital species are protected at a time when the species is feeling the impacts of warming waters, pollution, and over-fishing. With so many challenges being faced, those on the water who have firsthand vital information, including that of the Sport Fishing Advisory Committee, need to be consulted.

Minister Leboutheillier, we write to ask you to undertake meaningful, time-sensitive consultations with the Sport Fishing Advisory Committee regarding the potential closure of Area 20. Coastal communities and marine ecosystems rely on it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alistair MacGregor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alistair MacGregor, MP
Cowichan-Malahat-Langford

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "Lisa-Marie Barron". The signature is cursive and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lisa-Marie Barron, MP
Nanaimo-Ladysmith
NDP Critic for Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard