



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

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Canada

Director General

Directrice générale

Biodiversity Management

Direction de la gestion de la biodiversité

October 25, 2024

Mr. Mark Pendergraft

Board Chair

Regional District of Okanagan–Similkameen

< info@rdos.bc.ca >

Dear Mr. Pendergraft:

Thank you for your correspondence of November 29, 2023, addressed to the Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, regarding the prevention of zebra and quagga mussels from entering British Columbia (BC) waters. I have been asked to respond on the Minister's behalf, and I regret the delay.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) agrees that prevention is the key to addressing the threat of invasive mussels in BC. Effective aquatic invasive species (AIS) management is a shared priority and responsibility across federal, provincial, and territorial governments. DFO collaborates with provinces, territories, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and other federal organizations to enforce the *Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations* and help prevent prohibited species from entering and spreading within Canada.

The Department supports the Province of British Columbia's efforts in managing AIS within BC's freshwaters. DFO officials meet regularly with their BC counterparts to discuss emerging AIS threats and support for freshwater AIS initiatives, including early detection monitoring programs. The Department continues to invest in measures to prevent the spread of AIS. On February 14, 2024, Minister Lebouthillier announced [funding of up to \\$540,000 from 2023 to 2025](#) for the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation. This is in addition to the [\\$36.6 million which was announced to fight AIS in Canada in May 2023](#). This funding includes \$8.75 million for DFO's newly created [Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Fund](#), and \$3.6 million specifically for the Department's Pacific Region.

Further, since 2022, DFO has added two new fishery officer positions in the Pacific Region to work with the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Yukon, and the CBSA to prevent the introduction and spread of prohibited species. In 2023–2024, the Department acquired two decontamination trailers in the Pacific Region that will directly support the efforts of BC's invasive mussel defence program. Additionally, in [June](#) and [August](#) of 2024, DFO, in collaboration with the Province of Manitoba, conducted two watercraft inspection blitzes on Highway 1 between Ontario and Manitoba to intercept contaminated watercraft travelling overland, including those that may be travelling to BC from infested areas.

DFO works closely with the CBSA to implement protocols, training, tools, and procedures related to prohibited invasive species. DFO collaborates with the CBSA as the first line of defence to refer suspected cases of non-compliance with the *Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations*.

The Department also supports the Province of British Columbia's invasive mussel management by providing scientific advice. DFO, in collaboration with the National Aquatic Invasive Species Committee, is developing national standards for decontamination protocols, based on [a review of the effectiveness of "Clean, Drain, Dry and Decontaminate" treatments and protocols](#), and DFO's 2022 [national risk assessment for zebra and quagga mussels in Canada](#).

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,



Nicole Bouchard
Director General
Biodiversity Management
Programs Sector

c.c.: Office of the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., K.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions
and Intergovernmental Affairs