



April 25, 2019

Ken McDonald, Chair
Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans
MP - Avalon
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. McDonald:

Re: Study of Aquatic Invasive Species

On behalf of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, I am writing regarding the House of commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Ocean's (FOPO) study of the national aquatic invasive species (AIS) program. SARM is the independent association that represents all 296 rural municipal governments in Saskatchewan. We have a mandate in agricultural and municipal issues.

SARM has long been concerned about the threat of aquatic invasive species. We participate on a provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force and are in regular contact with Saskatchewan's Ministry of Environment on the file. Currently, SARM members are particularly focused on invasive mussels, which attach themselves to hard surfaces such as boats, docks, motor, anchors, intake pipes, and irrigation systems. Once invasive mussels are introduced to a waterbody, they are virtually impossible to eradicate. Prevention is the best defence against AIS. Unfortunately, invasive zebra and quagga mussels have been found in Ontario, Manitoba, and several neighbouring states.

Saskatchewan is at serious risk of AIS due to the natural connectivity of water systems with neighbouring provinces and states and the influx of out of province boats we see each summer, as tourists, anglers, water skiers and wakeboarders flock to our pristine lakes. Last year, the provincial Ministry of Environment conducted inspections on 2,922 watercrafts entering or already travelling in Saskatchewan. Fifty of these boats required decontamination, and five had visible adult mussels on them. Without immediate action, it is only a matter of time before invasive mussels are established in Saskatchewan.

Not only do invasive mussels disrupt ecosystems, they also have a significant economic impact. Sandy beaches can be overtaken by sharp mussel shells. Drinking water and hydropower infrastructure become clogged, as mussels attach and breed on any hard surface. Fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism can all be damaged by the spread of AIS. SaskPower has identified seven power generation facilities that are high-risk for damage from the introduction of AIS. These facilities account for 64 per cent of SaskPower's generation capacity, which means the introduction of invasive mussels would impact a significant portion of Saskatchewan residents and businesses. The cost implication is in the millions of dollars. In Ontario, dealing with invasive mussels costs almost \$100 million annually. Recognizing the implications of AIS, SARM members adopted two resolutions in 2016 calling on the provincial and federal government to lead the fight to prevent the spread of invasive mussels throughout Saskatchewan waterbodies by establishing check points at all border crossings and decontaminating infested boats

This spring, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development released a report on aquatic invasive species. The Commissioner reported that it costs far less to prevent an AIS from entering an area than to control it afterwards. SARM wholeheartedly agrees. We also understand that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) leads the Aquatic Invasive Species Science Program and Aquatic Invasive Species National Core Program. These programs are intended to prevent the introduction of AIS; respond rapidly when new AIS are detected; manage the spread of established species; and work with other jurisdictions to ensure national consistency and collaboration on issues related to managing AIS. The Commissioner's report found that both DFO and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) have not taken the appropriate steps required to prevent the spread of AIS, including zebra and quagga mussels. In addition, DFO has yet to determine which species and pathways pose the greatest threat or determine which species were the most important to regulate.

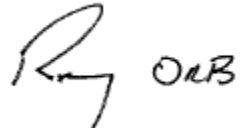
SARM believes the federal government can do more to uphold its commitments under these programs. Too many Canadians remain unaware of the risks associated with AIS and how they may be inadvertently contributing to the spread of AIS. We are also concerned to hear that the *Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations* are not adequately enforced. More needs to be done to ensure that both DFO and CSBA officials are properly equipped to prevent AIS from entering into Canada. It is also critical that DFO and CBSA clearly understand their responsibilities as it pertains to AIS. Overall, SARM supports the recommendations of the Commissioner and calls upon DFO to implement these recommendations as soon as possible.

We understand that environmental protection and sustainability is an important priority for the federal government. We believe protecting Canada's pristine waterbodies against the threat of AIS needs to be considered an important piece to that puzzle. The environmental, social, and economic impact of aquatic invasive species can be in the

range of billions of dollars. All levels of government have a role to play, but leadership from the federal government is of the utmost importance.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Orb". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "O".

Ray Orb
President

cc: Todd Doherty, Vice-Chair, MP – Cariboo – Prince George
Gord Johns, Vice Chair, MP – Courtenay – Alberni
Mel Arnold, MP – North Okanagan – Shuswap
Blaine Calkins, MP – Red Deer – Lacombe
Sean Casey, Parliamentary Secretary, MP – Charlottetown
Pat Finnigan, MP – Miramichi – Grand Lake
Colin Fraser, MP – West Nova
Ken Hardie, MP – Fleetwood – Port Kells
Robert J. Morrissey, MP – Egmont
Churence Rogers, MP – Bonavista – Burin – Trinity