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HOUSE OF COMMONS
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Elizabeth May
Member of Parliament / Député(e)
Saanich — Gulf Islands

Circonscription

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The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez
The Minister of Transport
330 Sparks Street
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The Honourable Diane Lebovillier
The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, ON
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The Honourable Steven Guilbeault
The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
200, boulev. Sacré-Coeur
Gatineau, QC
K1A 0H3

March 26th, 2024

Dear Ministers,

I am writing on the state of marine matters on the Salish Sea. The Saanich-Gulf Islands constituency encompasses a diverse coastal marine ecosystem and island archipelago with multiple harbours and communities. The entire area is on the territory of a number of Coast Salish Indigenous nations. For these reasons it is host to many cross-jurisdictional marine matters of concern to residents and the environment.

As I have outlined in previous correspondence to you, marine issues continue to worsen. They have grown beyond the scope of municipal and Local Trust Committees (LTC) bodies as well as the provincial government.

Following a well attended full day round table on our region's marine issues, attended by federal, provincial, First Nations, municipal, Islands Trustees, CRD representation, industry stakeholders and community organizations, this letter sets out our shared requests for action from the federal government to respect Indigenous rights and prioritize ecosystem health.



The largest elephant in the room is the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. We submit to you that the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority should have no role in marine matters beyond its borders - from Roberts Bank and the Fraser River up to and including Burrard Inlet. In our waters we hope to eventually see a port authority for the Salish Sea.

Our agenda primarily focused on mooring buoys, derelict vessels, freighter anchorages and liveaboards in our harbours. The overarching goal is to ensure that our Salish Sea, including its harbours and adjacent shorelines, are clean and safe for all stakeholders. These are widely perceived as some of the thorniest issues for governance in the region. They are frequently the subject of concerns raised with me as federal MP, as well as provincial, municipal and LTC offices.

On mooring buoys, the situation, historically well managed became an unregulated mess in 2012 with the passage of Harper's omnibus budget bill C-45. That massive piece of legislation made substantial changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, including moving the placement of private mooring buoys to the category of "minor works". Since that time there has been a proliferation of such buoys creating a major crisis in some harbours. I raise Ganges Harbour on Salt Spring Island in particular. The current situation is a crisis that touches on social issues of housing and serious social and pollution problems. Due to the acute lack of housing people are living in dangerous conditions on unsafe non-vessels made possible by these buoys.

We urge the government to revisit and reverse the changes made in 2012 in C-45. The creation and placement of mooring buoys urgently requires a regulatory framework, as in the past.

Specific to the matter of derelict vessels, we would appreciate being kept abreast of plans for the Derelict Vessel Implementation Fund. It is urgently needed and we are very committed to seeing it operational and successful as soon as possible.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss these urgent requests for action with you.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament, Saanich-Gulf Islands

In collaboration with,

Adam Olsen
Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Saanich North and the Islands

Gary Holman
Capital Regional District Electoral Area Director, Salt Spring Island



Paul Brent
Capital Regional District Electoral Area Director, Southern Gulf Islands

Cliff McNeil-Smith
Mayor, Town of Sidney

David Maude
Mayne Island Local Trustee, Vice-Chair of Executive Committee, Islands Trust

Laura Patrick
Salt Spring Island Local Trustee, Islands Trust

Timothy Peterson
Lasqueti Island Local Trustee, Vice-Chair of Executive Committee, Islands Trust

Chris Hutton, RPP, MCIP
Regional Planning Manager, Islands Trust

Kyle Armstrong, CERP, M.Sc.
Executive Director, Peninsula Streams Society

Michael Simmons
Vice President, Saanich Inlet Protection Society (SIPS)

Frances Pugh
Secretary, Treasurer, Saanich Inlet Protection Society (SIPS)

Sarah Cook
Executive Director, SeaChange Marine Conservation Society

Bob Peart
Chair, Friends of Shoal Harbour Society

Ian Cameron, Ed.D.
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Education Psychology and Leadership Studies (EPLS), University of Victoria

Malcolm Falconer
Tsehum Harbour Stakeholder Group

Jocelyn Gifford
Chair, Roberts Bay Residents Association

John R. Harper, P.Geo., Ph.D.
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Ling Zhang
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