

Dear Mr. Harper,

Monday, March 26, 2012

This is not the time for the federal Government of Canada to be abdicating its responsibility of regulating fish habitat. The Commons environment committee has recommended downloading much of the job of environmental assessment to the provinces and revising the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Otto Langer, an aquatic ecologist says Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his ministers are planning to remove protection for fish habitat and amend the act so it only applies to 'fish of economic, cultural or ecological significance, *whatever that could be interpreted to mean*—instead of all fish. That would essentially gut the Fisheries Act. Said Langer, "I mourn for my grandchildren and for the future of this country if we decide to undermine protective, but not arduous legislation in order to expedite the rape of our natural resources by industrial interests."

I would respectfully suggest that most Canadian citizens are very comfortable with the concept that the government through legislation and enforcement is protecting and preserving our natural environment. If anything the effort to protect, preserve, restore and improve the natural resources of this country needs to be improved not reduced. The recent report from the Royal Society of Canada pointed out that as a country, Canada is already doing a poor job of protecting our marine biodiversity.

Keith Ashfield, federal Fisheries Minister has stated that, "federal fisheries policies designed to protect fish are outdated and unfocused in terms of balancing environmental and economic realities." I would agree that there is a grave problem with federal fisheries policy. The reality is that Federal fisheries policy has allowed the collapse of the Atlantic cod fishery, at one time the greatest fishery in the world. You are allowing the imminent collapse of the wild Pacific salmon fishery from the ravages of diseases and pestilence brought by open water fish farms. You are doing far too little to stop the invasion of the Asian carp into the great lakes and the subsequent destruction of the great lakes fishery. Isn't it time that the balance moved to protecting the fish and the environment?