

October 4, 2016

Mr. Kevin Murphy
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of the Environment
5th Floor, 3211 Albert Street
Regina SK S4S 5W6

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Thank you for taking the time with your staff to meet with stakeholders on June 23, 2016 to discuss the issues around invasive species and in particular, Zebra mussels. We have continued our research on this file over the summer.

The potential economic and environmental damage caused by an invasion of Zebra and Guagga mussels is alarming. The most disturbing part of the entire situation is the need for more coordinated action by the Province of Saskatchewan to address this threat.

We ask that the Province address the apparent lack of inter-agency coordination and cooperation. There appears to be no clear leadership; Sask Ag and SaskPower were both looking for answers at the meeting. The Saskatchewan Water Security Agency (SWSA) and Sask Water are apparently not fully engaged.

The offers of assistance from the group in attendance were sincere and will be carried out, but we are surprised that few proactive actions appear to have been recommended to them before now. While some connection between the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation and SWSA is in place, the majority of groups have not been engaged. It is unfortunate that only one fishing tournament group had been communicated with, when Saskatchewan Environment simultaneously recognizes that the angling community could be strong ambassadors for the 'Clean, Dry & Drain' program. Clearly, more extensive communication is required regarding this program.

The challenge of protecting Saskatchewan water bodies from these invasive species is a very real and very complex issue. Unfortunately, it is a challenge that will likely cost the people of the province significant resources; this cost can only be minimized if damage is controlled. We remain extremely concerned about the lack of coordinated action demonstrated by the Province and are hopeful that you will embrace the attached proposed plan to correct this.

We offer to support your efforts however we can to make the challenge less difficult and ask that you make this file a top priority immediately.

Yours sincerely,



Steve McLellan
CEO

Mr. Kevin Murphy
Assistant Deputy Minister
September 20, 2016
Page 2

- c. Honorable Scott Moe, Minister of the Environment
Deputy Minister, Cam Swan
Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Environment Committee
Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Recommendations for immediate action addressing mussel invasion of Saskatchewan waters:

- 1) Immediately create an intergovernmental task team with a Chair who has authority to direct other agency and ministry actions. The inclusion of NGO's with direct connection to the issue should be considered for participation.
- 2) Create a response plan for the Provincial reaction when the mussels are found in a Saskatchewan water body. Detailed communication plans, with a clear legal authority explanation, dedicated specific financial and human resources, and a media plan to communicate clearly but without causing undue public alarm, should be part of the response plan.
- 3) Create and implement communications plans which ensure that materials and signage are in every place where people who use the water bodies congregate. Boat launches, sporting goods stores and watercraft retailers are some areas to be included.
- 4) Communicate to all people working in and around water bodies about how to look for, and what to do when any mussels are found. Conduct regular surveys, particularly of SaskParks staff (programs, conservation and maintenance), private dock installers, marina operators, people with licensed docks and boat lifts, etc.
- 5) Coordinate the efforts of all agencies who undertake continuous testing, including SaskPower, Sask Water, irrigation operators, etc., with required monthly reports of locations tested and results.
- 6) Immediately begin extensive testing on all areas east of Tobin Lake in response to the confirmed mussel invasion of Cedar Lake, Manitoba which connects to the Saskatchewan River system. Efforts to protect the E.B. Campbell facilities should be undertaken immediately as it may be a first point of invasion among key infrastructures.
- 7) Increase the number of decontamination units to four or six, and create and circulate detailed information on the use of vinegar or bleach to decontaminate water craft and structures appropriately.
- 8) Begin discussions on how to increase the financial resources in 2017 by charging a fee or surcharge on users of the water systems and ensure those funds are directed to prevention and when required, mitigation activities.
- 9) Utilize current government databases of boat license holders, anglers, etc. to email messages on the issue and actions required to stop the spread of these invasive species throughout the season.
- 10) Communicate with all interested and involved stakeholder groups on all actions being taken, any confirmed findings, requests for assistance or other issues of importance. Emails sent monthly will help those organizations and individuals develop a much clearer picture of activities.