

Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister
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Canada

Right Honourable Stephen Harper.

As reported in the March 17th edition of the *The Globe and Mail*, the Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, confirmed the intent of the Government to consider significant changes to the habitat provisions of the *Fisheries Act*. Unconfirmed reports have indicated the changes will result in the removal of the habitat provisions of the *Fisheries Act* and possible amendments to the law list of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Comments attributed to Minister Ashfield indicate a strong desire of the Government to address perceived shortcomings of the present legislation. However, to remove the fish habitat provisions from the Fisheries Act and instead focus on “fisheries of economic, cultural and ecological value” will not address the underlying concerns and, presents a clear and present risk to environmental oversight and responsible business development. In our view, it is the shortcomings of existing regulatory guidance and review, which demand equal response to all development proposals regardless of severity of impact that require change. The *Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society* does not support removal of the fish habitat provisions so much as a robust strengthening of the regulatory mechanisms to address their misdirected application. It is critical that Canada retain its internationally recognized suite of environmental legislation and practice as a basis for business development, instead of abandoning those standards and risking the diminishment of economic opportunity.

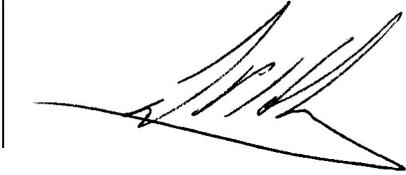
The *Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society* is committed to a world where humans and wildlife co-exist. It has direct linkages with the international parent body of *The Wildlife Society* whose mission is to represent and serve the professional community of scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, and others who work actively to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and its habitats worldwide.

The members of *The Wildlife Society* manage, conserve, and study wildlife populations and habitats. They actively manage forests, conserve wetlands, restore endangered species, conserve wildlife on private and public lands, resolve wildlife damage and disease problems, and enhance biological diversity.

We remain hopeful the Government will reconsider its intent to modify legislation and instead focus on addressing the shortcomings of existing regulatory direction and oversight associated with implementation of the fish habitat provisions of the *Fisheries Act*. As a society dedicated to improving and promoting professional environmental practice, we would be pleased to provide comment and advice on potential

improvements to regulatory mechanisms that would better sustain Canada's fish resources.

Respectively yours;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Hobson', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dave Hobson
President

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