



Canadian Wildlife Conservation Partners

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Honourable Joanne Thompson
Ministry of Fisheries
200 Kent St, Station 15N100
Ottawa ON K1A 0E6

Dear Hon. Joanne Thompson,

On behalf of thousands of Canadians, we are writing to express concern that the federal government's review of the *Salmon Allocation Policy* is about to take a deeply damaging and irreversible turn.

Salmon as a Common Property Resource is a bedrock principle meaning that Canadian salmon collectively belong to all Canadians, managed by the government for the benefit of all, a concept that underpins the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Abandoning this language from the *Salmon Allocation Policy* (SAP) sends a signal to ordinary Canadians that the Public Interest is not guiding policy decisions. We worry that these changes could trigger an unacceptable shift towards a semi-privatized model.

The Public Right to Fish must be explicitly protected and reaffirmed in the SAP. The government's refusal to acknowledge this public right signals a move away from the Public Interest and fish as a Common Property Resource.

The public fishery – made up overwhelmingly of ordinary Canadians – must have priority access to Chinook and coho salmon once conservation goals and First Nations Section 35 requirements are met. The public fishery is already just a small fraction of the salmon available to harvest; further reducing it is not an option.

These proposed changes imperil the economic benefits of a public fishery that supports more than 9,000 jobs and \$1.275 billion in expenditures in B.C. alone, far more than all other sectors. This is a life-or-death situation for coastal communities and a radical change to the principles that govern conservation and allocation of public resources.

Our members are committed to a shared future in which the common property rights of all Canadians are protected and that the rights of Canadians to access and steward their fish and wildlife resources remain firmly intact.

We support access to the land, fish and wildlife through the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which is inherently democratic and unique to our history and culture. The model declares that wildlife belongs to everyone, not monarchs, nobles, and the wealthy, as is the case in much of the world. The Public Trust Doctrine establishes a trusteeship in which the government holds and manages

wildlife, fish, waterways, and public resources for the benefit of everyone. It is the bedrock of wildlife management and conservation in North America. This is not something to be bargained away lightly.

The model also holds that science and data should guide wildlife management, not political objectives. We must not deviate from these principles.

The SAP currently holds that, “Salmon is a common property resource that is managed by the federal government on behalf of all Canadians, both present and future.” Abandoning that principle would shift public access to fishing away from a federal, conservation-based management approach in which we all have access to salmon when conservation needs are met. Canadians should not be alienated from public resources.

Across this nation, our members are passionately protective of Canadian fish and wildlife, and we are committed voters and organizers. Decisions that impact our way of life can, and do, become ballot box initiatives for many of us.

Canadian anglers donate hundreds of thousands of hours and millions of dollars annually to salmon conservation, restoration and enhancement through dedicated license fees and surcharges, funding streams that are uniquely generated by anglers themselves through licenses and surcharges. The public fishery is the only dedicated, sustainable source of revenue for many salmon stewardship initiatives.

When access to the public fishery disappears, public support disappears. And when public support disappears, the fish disappear. Anglers who are denied meaningful opportunities to harvest fish are alienated from the resource, and with that goes volunteer and financial support for conservation and the monumental effort we contribute to habitat restoration, enhancement and hatcheries that support salmon stocks of concern.

The outdoor conservation community is deeply committed to protecting salmon for future generations. We intensely oppose the changes being considered by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and urge you to uphold the principles that have guided wildlife and fisheries conservation in North America for over a century.

You must ensure that future generations are not cheated of the inheritance that Canadians have worked so tirelessly to protect.

Yours in conservation,

Big Game Records Club of British Columbia

British Columbia Trappers Association

British Columbia Wildlife Federation

Grand Slam Club Ovis Canada

Hunters for British Columbia

Manitoba Lodges and Outfitters Association

Manitoba Wildlife Federation

North American Falconers Association

Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen’s Alliance

Safari Club International – Canada

United Guides and Outfitters of New Brunswick

Veteran Hunters Canada

Wild Sheep Society of British Columbia

Wild Origins Canada