



ALBERTA

ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTED AREAS

Office of the Minister

March 25, 2024

The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6
DFO.Minister.Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Dear Minister Lebouthillier:

Invasive zebra and quagga mussels pose a serious risk to Alberta's aquatic ecosystems and infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and municipal water supply systems. This risk is shared by our neighbouring provinces and territories and, consequently, also by Canada.

Given that invasive mussels can be imported to Canada as stowaways on objects such as trailered watercraft, and that ports of entry are bottlenecks through which all watercraft must travel, it follows that prevention at ports of entry is essential for biosecurity.

Since its inception in 2015, Alberta has been implementing a mandatory watercraft inspection and decontamination program at international and inter-provincial border crossing locations. As a result of Environment and Protected Areas' efforts, Alberta remains free of invasive mussels. The protection provided by our Aquatic Invasive Species program is integrated with, and supports, our neighbouring jurisdictions' mussel defence systems. In this regard, Alberta's prevention efforts protect Canada more broadly.

To date, Alberta's invasive mussel defence system has been supported largely by provincial funding and delivery. With the recent detection of quagga mussels in the Snake River in Idaho, United States (U.S.), the risk of invasive mussels entering Canada, particularly through ports of entry along Alberta and British Columbia border crossing locations, has increased substantially. Once inside Canada, the risk of transport between provinces and territories is greatly increased. Addressing this significant risk requires increased effort, financial support, and collaboration.

Alberta is aware of efforts by British Columbia municipalities and watershed groups, as well as Parks Canada, to ban watercraft from entering their respective jurisdictions. Such efforts are evidence of the recognition of the high level of risk posed by aquatic invasive species and the need for enhanced protection.

Alberta is looking for similar collaboration with the federal government to mitigate this risk. To ensure proper biosecurity measures are taken at the Canada-U.S. border, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) must conduct mandatory inspections and decontamination of invasive mussels on watercraft entering Canada from the U.S. in addition to Alberta's inspection program. The assistance of your department and the CBSA in mitigating negative impacts on Alberta and the rest of the country is essential and urgently needed.

Given the urgency and upcoming boating season, I respectfully request information on what tangible actions and solutions your department and the CBSA will be taking to prevent the entry of invasive mussels at Alberta points of entry by April 30, 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rebecca Schulz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rebecca" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Schulz".

Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Environment and Protected Areas

cc: The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc
Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental
Affairs

Erin O'Gorman
President, Canada Border Services Agency