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HOUSE OF COMMONS
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Elizabeth May

Member of Parliament / Député(e)
Saanich — Gulf Islands

Circonscription

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The Honourable Diane Lebouthillier
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

January 30, 2025

Re: DFO decision to increase herring harvest

Dear Minister,

I am writing to echo the concerns raised by six WSÁNEĆ Hereditary Chiefs, as well as many other stakeholders and partners, regarding DFO's recent decision to increase the Pacific herring harvest rate from 10 per cent of biomass in 2024 to 14 per cent in 2025. This decision was made despite the WSÁNEĆ Hereditary Chiefs calling on DFO in November 2024 to place an immediate moratorium on the Pacific herring fishery.

Pacific herring are crucial for marine biodiversity in the Strait of Georgia. Unregulated commercial fisheries in the area pose a significant threat to the current population. The best strategy to encourage the recovery of the herring population is to place an immediate moratorium on the commercial gillnet and seine herring fisheries until the ecosystem recovers. A commercial fisheries moratorium and protection program will protect the current herring population and will encourage population recovery to sustainable levels.

Canada is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Accordingly we should be regulating the herring population with cultural knowledge by listening to the advice and experiences of the WSÁNEĆ First Nations. By ignoring the November 2024 call to action from the WSÁNEĆ Hereditary Chiefs, DFO is setting a worrying precedent for meaningful consultation with Indigenous peoples. Consistent and meaningful consultation on sustainable fishing with indigenous groups within the riding will encourage meeting our ocean conservation targets and ultimately restoring the herring population.



I ask that you cancel the decision to increase the herring harvest rate for 2025 and instead place an immediate moratorium on the Pacific herring fishery. Such action must be immediately taken to prevent ecological collapse and harm to already at-risk species like chinook salmon and Southern Resident Killer Whales.

Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands
Leader of the Green Party of Canada

