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

The Hon Joyce Murray  
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

The Hon Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The Hon Omar Alghabra  
Minister of Transport

May 9, 2022

RE: Failures to Protect Southern Resident Killer Whales

Dear Ministers,

I write to you as friends and, collectively, as Cabinet members each of whom carries essential responsibilities for preserving the highly endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales.

Within my constituency, we have a very professional and dedicated group of volunteers. They have added substantially to our body of knowledge. The attached documentation confirms the findings of the Southern Gulf Islands Whale Sighting Network active on Saturna, Pender and Mayne Islands. This data is integrated by the BC Cetacean Sighting Network (run by Ocean Wise), reviewed by researchers from Saturna Island Research and Education Society (SIMRES) and Simon Fraser University. It demonstrates the Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) are in the Salish Sea almost year-round. But the Interim Sanctuary Zones (ISZ) and the voluntary vessel commercial vessel slow down are only in effect from July to November. This is clearly inadequate if the goal is to protect the SRKW under the Species at Risk Act.



Beyond that, restrictions on vessel movements within the ISZs have not been enforced. There is minimal enforcement on the water and the existing electronic monitoring system is inadequate to the task. Less than 2% of all violations have been ticketed despite significant documentation of frequent infractions. And these data are from covid years with no US boats. The open border in 2022 will prove a further challenge. No vessel owners have ever been fined. Ever.

The approach in establishing the ISZ is described as based on the "precautionary principle." The reality is the federal government lacked baseline data on the whales. The core of the precautionary principle is that as data is received, adaptative management requires new approaches. Clearly, we really need to revise and improve the whole approach to the SRKW of the Salish Sea.

Can I assist by proposing that each of you designate someone from your political staff and someone from your departmental staff to attend an urgent summit on the SRKW with the members of the Southern Gulf Island Whale Sighting networks, SIMRES AND SFU researchers.

I will assist any way I can in arranging such a meeting to take place in Saanich-Gulf Islands.

Thanking you in advance,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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

