

Feedback Process for Recommendations Related to Fisheries Act

In March 2017, the federal [Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans](#) released a report on their review the [Fisheries Act](#), which included recommendations for changes to the Act. [Click here](#) to access the report.

The intent of the review was to ensure that changes made in 2012 did not compromise the protection of fish habitats. The AAMDC contributed to this review process by providing a written brief to the Committee in the fall of 2016.

The next step in the process is for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to respond to the Committee's report, which will occur by June 24, 2017. AAMDC members are encouraged to write to the Minister prior to that date with any concerns or suggestions related to the Committee's recommendations. There will be further consultation opportunities after the Minister responds to the report, but these may be more related to implementation of recommendations, rather than whether the recommendations should be adopted.

Letters can be directed to the following:

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Please copy the AAMDC on any correspondence sent to the Minister on this issue.

The 32 recommended changes to the *Fisheries Act* reflect a perception on the part of the Committee that regulation of projects that may impact fish habitats needs to be broadened. Several of the recommendations are based on strengthening the regulatory process, which may have adverse impacts for municipalities. Some significant recommendations include the following

- That section 35(1) of the Fisheries Act return to its wording as of 29 June 2012 which reads: "No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in the harmful alteration or disruption, or the destruction, of fish habitat." Remove the concept of "serious harm" to fish from the Act. (Recommendation 1)
- That protection from harmful alteration or disruption, or the destruction, of fish habitat be extended to all ocean and natural freshwater habitats to ensure healthy biodiversity. (Recommendation 6)
- To protect fish habitat from key activities that can damage habitat, such as destructive fishing practices and cumulative effects of multiple activities. (Recommendation 7)
- That Fisheries and Oceans Canada put sufficient protection provisions into the Fisheries Act that act as safeguards for farmers and agriculturalists, and municipalities. (Recommendation 8)
- That Fisheries and Oceans Canada work with the farm community and rural municipalities to provide incentives and expert advice to conserve and enhance fish

habitat and populations and utilize the enforcement approach as a last resort. (Recommendation 9)

- That permitting be expedited to allow for works that involve the restoration of damaged infrastructure and emergency works to protect people and communities. (Recommendation 10)
- That the Fisheries Act should include a clear definition of what constitutes fish habitat. (Recommendation 11)
- That any changes to habitat protection in the Fisheries Act must be supported by a reduced reliance on project proponent self-assessment. (Recommendation 18)

Enquiries may be directed to:

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