

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

Honourable Bernadette Jordan  
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

VIA E-MAIL

Dear Minister:

**RE: Big Bar Slide on the Fraser River**

First, we would like to offer congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

We write to you regarding the Big Bar Landslide on the Fraser River.

We are a concerned group composed of public fishery and commercial fishing representatives and some Lower Fraser River First Nations who have had discussions regarding recovery plans and sustainable access to fishery resources on the Lower Fraser River. Those involved in this dialogue have observed and read reports about the Big Bar slide disaster. It is understood that significant effort has been made, and expenditure incurred by the Federal and Provincial governments, to address the serious state of the Big Bar slide site on the Fraser River. However, indications are that the challenges to ensuring that fish can pass the slide area during next spring and summer runoff are still significant and far from resolved.

A recent report, developed for the Pacific Salmon Commission, states that there is a possibility that some Interior Fraser River stocks of Sockeye and Chinook face extinction should the landslide rubble not be properly removed or a fully functioning fish way installed by the time next year's salmon runs are due to arrive at the site. The slide has also impacted the Interior Fraser Steelhead, facing extinction with returns of only 125 fish in 2019.

As salmon are an iconic species to all British Columbians, and Interior Fraser River Sockeye and Chinook salmon and Steelhead faced significant challenges, likely due to climate change and habitat impacts, before the slide occurred, it is imperative that no expense be spared and that all approaches to solve the issues be explored. We, as British Columbians, as First Nations, as communities, as the public, and as businesses, all value and rely on salmon in different but important ways, must see a successful and timely resolution to this natural disaster.

It was your predecessor, Minister Wilkinson, who remarked that he did not wish to preside over the extinction of Fraser River Chinook salmon. This is a noble aim and there is full support to address the issue from that perspective. No one would like to oversee the extinction of runs of salmon or steelhead on the Fraser River. The time for action is now – this is an emergency of national social and economic significance and must be treated as such. If the project is no longer considered to have emergency status, this must be changed immediately. Appropriate human and financial resources must be available to determine and implement a solution that meets the timelines of the returning salmon.

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Canadians and Provincial and Federal governments have accepted that the Big Bar Slide is a natural disaster. And, there must also be agreement as to the urgency in which a solution is found and implemented. It will be our aim in the coming weeks and months to ensure that full understanding of the situation is known by MPs and the public so that you may be certain that you have the support of Canadians to do whatever needs to be done to fix this problem in time to allow for safe passage of salmon and steelhead that will return in the spring of 2020.

Momentum and action must continue – British Columbians, Canadians, and more importantly, the salmon, cannot endure another season of impediments to their recovery and progress.

We stand by and look forward to hearing of the plans for a successful and timely resolution to the Big Bar slide disaster.

Sincerely,



Martin Paish, Chair  
Sport Fishing Advisory Board



Owen Bird, Executive Director  
Sport Fishing Institute



Bill Bosch, President  
BC Wildlife Federation



Rod Clapton, President  
BC Federation of Drift Fishers



Marc Laynes, Chair  
Fraser Valley Angling Guides



Dean Werk, President  
Fraser Valley Salmon Society



Oliver Rutschmann and  
Nathan Bootsma, Co-chairs  
Fraser River Sportfishing Alliance



Jason Tonelli, President  
Vancouver Sport Fishing  
Guides Association