



January 23, 2018

Via Email:

The Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Strategy
Mr. Mike Carlson, DFO Regional Director, Conservation and Protection Area
Mr. Paul Cottrell, DFO Marine mammal coordinator
Mrs. Karen Leslie, DFO Regional Manager SARA

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of BC Nature (the Federation of BC Naturalists) which represents more than 6,100 members belonging to 53 naturalists' clubs in British Columbia, to express support for legislation promised by Fisheries Minister Dominic LeBlanc to ensure that no boat approaches within 200 metres of **southern resident Killer Whales (SRKW), *Orcinus Orca***, in Canadian waters. Studies by NOAA (the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) indicate that Washington State laws that imposed a 200-yard zone between boats and whales have had a positive effect, with increased foraging behaviour by the whales.

Equally important, we strongly recommend that government immediately address the key problem of food shortage for the southern resident killer whales, by for example, re-examining and implementing the recommendations on the Cohen Commission on salmon and protecting habitat.

Further, we recommend that government regulate the propulsion noise levels of boats to require lower levels of underwater noise emissions. This should apply to commercial shipping boats, especially given the increasing freighter and tanker boat traffic in the Salish Sea.

We recommend that adequate enforcement measures be employed to ensure the effectiveness of this coming legislation. Furthermore, we urge that the locations of SRKW pods be continuously monitored and that shipping lanes be adjusted to avoid the whales as much as possible, especially in areas where they are known to forage regularly.

BC Nature commends the intent to not only protect the 76 remaining animals, but also to aid in their recovery. BC Nature further welcomes protective legislation for all marine mammals. We recommend two additional steps: address the food shortage for SRKW and regulate boat propulsion to require lower noise emissions.

Yours truly

Cornelis Visser, Ph.D., Acting President
For A. Burger, Ph.D., President
BC Nature (Federation of British Columbia Naturalists)

cc Minister Dominic LeBlanc - Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard