

Received April 6, 2018 from Cheryl Webb - Cheryl.Webb@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Burger:

Thank you for your correspondence of February 22, 2018 regarding Southern Resident Killer Whales. I have been asked to respond on behalf of the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) shares your concern for the well-being of marine life. The Department is committed to the protection of Canada's resident killer whales, and to the recovery of this species. To this end, please be assured that Minister LeBlanc is giving careful consideration to the petition for an emergency order, and the management actions requested therein. Additionally, I would like to share with you some of the department's numerous measures initiated since the Symposium on the Recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales was held in October 2017.

On March 15, 2018, Minister LeBlanc, announced \$9.1 million in new science funding to develop and test technologies able to detect the presence of whales. In response to requests from mariners and Canadians for ways to better protect whales, DFO researchers will work with partners to develop and test various acoustic and imaging technologies that can help detect the presence of whales. The ability to capture near real-time information could help alert mariners of whales in a particular area, reducing the risk of collisions.

Minister LeBlanc also announced over \$3.1 million for a number of projects that will build on existing partnerships to study the impacts of underwater noise on marine mammals, including the Southern Resident Killer Whale. The research will focus on understanding stressors that affect the quality of the marine environment and impacts on marine mammals.

In addition to these Oceans Protection Plan investments, Budget 2018 announced \$167.4 million over five years to advance efforts to protect and recover endangered whale species in Canada, notably the Southern Resident Killer Whale, the North Atlantic Right Whale and the St. Lawrence Estuary Beluga. This includes funding for science activities to help better understand factors affecting the health of whale populations, as well as actions to help address the threats arising from human activities.

The [*Recovery Strategy for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales \(Orcinus orca\) in Canada*](#) describes the threats to resident killer whales, and identifies broad strategies, or approaches, to addressing these threats including ensuring the whales have an adequate and accessible supply of chinook salmon.

To that end, DFO staff are currently consulting with Indigenous groups and stakeholders on potential measures which include proposed salmon fishing closures and potential reductions in physical and acoustic disturbance from associated with salmon fishing vessels, which are designed to improve chinook availability for Southern Resident Killer Whales in key foraging areas. These measures are being considered in the development of the 2018 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for salmon which will be released in June 2018.

I hope that the information I have provided is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Webb
Regional Director
Ecosystems Management
Pacific Region