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March 15, 2012

Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper,
Prime Minister,
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON,
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

The 38,000 members of the B.C. Wildlife Federation (BCWF) are extremely concerned with the proposed changes to the habitat provisions in the federal *Fisheries Act* and the manner in which these changes would be instituted, as reported by Otto Langer in a Postmedia News article of March 13th 2012.

Finn Donnelly, MP for New Westminster, asked the question in the House of Commons if government planned to gut the Fisheries Act habitat provisions in the federal budget omnibus legislation. The response by Fisheries Minister Keith Ashfield “There has been absolutely no decision made with regard to the issues” raises the concern that this option is being considered and the threat to the habitat provisions is real.

Otto Langer is respected by the BC Wildlife Federation. In 2009 he received our Conservationist of the Year Award. Our members are passionate advocates for fish and wildlife and the sustainability of their habitats.

Over the years BCWF volunteer members, through broad-based community stewardship partnerships across BC, have invested heavily in stream, river and lake fisheries habitat rehabilitation projects and have a stake in the protection of that substantial stewardship investment.

The alteration of the provisions of Section 35 of the federal Fisheries Act would be a major step backward for these resources.

If this approach is taken, groups such as ours will press the province to address the protection of aquatic habitat in legislation such as the proposed provincial *Water Act*. The potential mosaic of habitat provisions will not be in the interests of the environment, industry or Canada.

Prime Minister, to address any issues with the federal Fisheries Act, consultation must be conducted in an open and transparent fashion. We request that you publically state that no

changes will be made to the habitat or other provisions unless this test is met.

The majority of our members have supported your party's opposition to the long gun registry and we applaud the recent vote that overturned this policy. However, as our members are passionate hunters and anglers, your proposed action against the habitat provisions of the Fisheries Act will totally erode any support for your government and will alienate commercial, recreational and First Nations fishers who place a high value on the protection and production of fish and wildlife.

Yours in conservation,



Rod Wiebe,
President
BC Wildlife Federation

Cc: Mr. Keith Ashfield Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Cc: Mr. Randy Kamp MP
Cc: Christy Clark Premier of British Columbia
Cc: Terry Lake, Minister of Environment, Province of BC
Cc: Adrian Dix, Leader of the New Democratic Party
Cc: Rob Fleming, Environment Critic, New Democratic Party