



*Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists
National Office, PO Box 962, Station F
Toronto, ON Canada M4Y 2N9
March 9, 2021*

Honourable George Heyman,
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Room 112 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Email: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: Proposed “Shoreline Protection Act”

Dear Minister Heyman,

On behalf of *Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists*, I am writing to express our professional support for the “*Shoreline Protection Act*” currently being proposed by the University of Victoria’s Environmental Law Centre (ELC) and WWF Canada.

Based on the data available to us from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and a growing body of scientific literature, the *Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists* is deeply concerned with the decline of salmon fisheries in BC and the decline of BC’s iconic southern resident killer whales. While some of the factors driving these declines, such as climate change and associated ocean temperature and salinity changes are difficult to address in the short term, protection and restoration of critical habitat present immediate opportunities for positive action.

As Oceana Canada’s 2020 fisheries audit has highlighted, the conservation of forage fish stock is one of the most important means of rebuilding the foundations of the food chains needed to rebuild healthy fisheries. Regrettably, throughout the world, ill-conceived development accompanied by uncontrolled hard armoring of shorelines has resulted in the destruction of vast areas of critical spawning habitat for forage fish.

As scientists and professional biologists, we feel that it is now urgent that Canadians restore these lost or degraded habitats, to meet the natural resource challenges before us. COSEWIC has now listed most of our Chinook Salmon populations as endangered. The restoration of BC’s Chinook Salmon populations and the southern killer whales depends largely on the restoration of forage fish populations. The conservation and restoration of spawning beaches is an urgent necessity. The State of Washington has enacted pro-active legislation to meet those challenges in Puget Sound. Biology knows no borders. British Columbia deserves a *Shoreline Protection Act* commensurate with that which protects forage fish populations in Washington State.

The proposal presented to you by the University of Victoria's ELC and WWF is, in our estimation, simply consistent with the scientific evaluation of environmental needs to restore BC's Salish Sea fisheries to a healthy state. The *Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists* hopes that your government will be able to implement this important and much needed piece of legislation.

Yours respectfully,



*Curt Schroeder B.Sc, M.E.Des.
President
Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists
Email: curt.schroeder@saskpolytech.ca*

*c.c.:
[WWF jbarrs@wwfcanada.org](mailto:WWF_jbarrs@wwfcanada.org)
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