

June 16, 2023

Funding to support a long-term, co-developed BC Coastal Marine Strategy

To the Honourable Katrine Conroy and Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services,

Coastal marine ecosystems are buckling beneath the weight of unprecedented stress resulting from the impacts of climate change and development. In the last few years, British Columbia has experienced catastrophic declines in salmon populations, ocean acidification and hypoxia, in addition to mass die-offs of intertidal marine life that were unable to survive the ravages of heat domes. Coastal marine ecosystems are falling out of balance and the communities and economies that rely on them are struggling as a result.

In 2020, the Government of British Columbia recognized the importance of addressing these issues by committing to implement a comprehensive Coastal Marine Strategy in 2024. Since then, the province has made great progress in developing the Strategy with the following actions:

- Creation of new Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to become a hub for coastal marine issues in the province;
- Development and release of a strong Coastal Marine Strategy Policy Intentions Paper in collaboration with Indigenous Nations. The Intentions Paper includes 30 policy intentions that the province intends to undertake over a 20 year horizon; and
- Hosting the Coastal Marine Strategy Forum, which provided a setting for collaborative engagement between government, environmental non-governmental organizations, and industry while being witnessed by representatives from Indigenous Nations.

Next year will be pivotal for the Coastal Marine Strategy, as the province aims to finalize its co-development with Indigenous Nations and begin implementation. We recommend that funds be allocated towards the Coastal Marine Strategy, such that written plans successfully translate into transformative real world action. Funding for this initiative will ensure that it is effective, sustainable over the long-term, and honours the processes and relationships that have produced a strong Coastal Marine Strategy Policy Intentions Paper.

We recommend that funds be allocated to:

- Maintain and further extend capacity for Indigenous Nations to participate and take on leadership roles within co-development and implementation of the Coastal Marine Strategy;
- Ensure coastal stakeholders and communities receive adequate opportunities to participate in co-development and implementation of the Coastal Marine Strategy; and,
- Enable the provincial government to implement the long-term, sustainable programs and policies that will be finalized with the implementation of the Coastal Marine Strategy.

A well funded Coastal Marine Strategy will support biodiverse coastal marine ecosystems that are able to mitigate the impacts of climate change, advance meaningful acts of reconciliation with Indigenous Nations, and uplift coastal communities and economies. The Coastal Marine Strategy has the potential to radically transform coastal governance and management across British Columbia. We all depend on the ocean; therefore, we ask that you allocate funds towards the Coastal Marine Strategy and not let this initiative fall short of its incredible potential.

Sincerely,



Alicia Elgert
Ocean Conservation Campaigner
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - British
Columbia
604.685.7445 ext. 29
alicia@cpawsbc.org
Vancouver, BC | Unceded territories of the
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh
(Squamish) & səlil wətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh)
Nations



Michael Bissonnette
Staff Lawyer
West Coast Environmental Law
604.684.7378 ext. 233
mbissonnette@wcel.org
Vancouver, BC | Unceded territories of the
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh
(Squamish) & səlil wətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh)
Nations