



SEP 7 2005

Ms. Vicky Husband, CM, OBC
The Pacific Marine Conservation Caucus
Salmon Committee
1037 Madore Avenue
Coquitlam, British Columbia
V3K 3B7

Dear Ms. Husband and co-signatories:

Thank you for your letters of June 17 and 28, 2005, concerning the Integrated Salmon Harvest Planning Committee (IHPC) and the process for making a decision for the 2005 exploitation rate limit for Cultus Lake sockeye.

You raise concerns about the manner in which the Commercial Salmon Advisory Board's (CSAB's) proposal for Cultus Lake sockeye was presented and considered at the IHPC. I appreciate your concerns. Regional staff are preparing to convene a sub-committee of the IHPC in the fall to develop a plan for undertaking consultations for the 2006 Integrated Fisheries Management Plans for salmon. As part of their work, the sub-committee will consider how best to deal with external proposals. The aim is to formulate a more structured process for considering proposals through the IHPC.

Regarding Cultus Lake sockeye, I recently announced that the 2005 exploitation rate limit would be set at 10-12%, as returns are forecast to be the lowest on record at only 200 fish. Rebuilding efforts — including broodstock collection, enhancements, and the potential for productivity improvements through predator removal — will also continue. I have attached a *News Release* for more information.

With the uncertainties regarding the CSAB's proposed recovery measures and the exceptionally low abundance in 2005, a significant increase in the exploitation rate in 2005 could not be adopted and still provide the necessary measures required to protect Cultus Lake sockeye. Analyses conducted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada demonstrated that there was great uncertainty in the ability of Cultus Lake sockeye to recover at a 30% exploitation rate, as was proposed by the CSAB.

.../2

Canada

Although the CSAB proposal was not accepted, regional officials are prepared to continue discussions with the CSAB and the IHPC on future recovery planning options for Cultus Lake sockeye.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. I appreciate the involvement of the Marine Conservation Caucus in the IHPC process. I hope that we can continue to work with all sectors through the IHPC on cooperative approaches that support both the conservation of the resource and the viability of the fishing industry.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Geoff", with a stylized flourish extending upwards and to the left.

Geoff Regan

Attachment