

September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister  
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

Dear Minister McKenna:

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Commercial Fisheries' Association (OCFA), the organization representing the interests of the commercial fishing industry in the Province of Ontario. We are writing today regarding the proposal for a National Marine Conservation Area on Lake Erie and want to make it clear that we do not support the request for a feasibility study for this initiative.

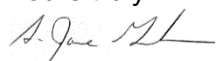
As background - on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the OCFA received an email from some local residents pushing for the creation of a National Marine Conservation Area around Point Pelee National Park, Pelee Island, and all of Pigeon Bay, seeking a letter of support for a feasibility study. While two members of the OCFA had met with a couple of members of this local group back in February of 2017, for an informal discussion about this initiative, the OCFA did not offer its support at that time and had several questions that needed to be addressed. That is the first and last time that the OCFA has heard anything about this initiative until the August 17<sup>th</sup> email of this year. Now we are being asked to write a letter of support for a motion for a feasibility study that is to be tabled in the House of Commons directed at the Minister of the Environment and the CEO of Parks Canada. Further, we are aware that information circulated previously to solicit support for this initiative erroneously indicated that the Ontario Commercial Fisheries' Association was in support of this NMCA on Lake Erie.

One of the reasons for our letter today is to clarify this misinformation that was included as part of an information package from these individuals. First and foremost, it is important for you to know that we have asked that the individuals associated with this project remove our name from their presentations, and make sure that all those who received this misinformation be contacted and corrected. Once again, the Ontario Commercial Fisheries' Association does not support this feasibility study proposal.

Further, we are also concerned about adding yet another level of bureaucracy and legislation to the day-to-day operations of the Great Lakes. With so many regulatory bodies already in control of what can and cannot happen in the lake, we have yet to hear a good case for why another level of government should be added. While there are platitudes of "consultation", we do not support another level of rules and regulations for the commercial fishing industry. Further, this NMCA is being proposed on some of the best fishing grounds in the Great Lakes and according to the *National Marine Conservation Area Act* there must be a zone within each NMCA that is fully protected. The OCFA sees no ecological reason to permanently prohibit commercial fishing in any part of the proposed area. The commercial fishery prides itself on its commitment to sustainability and management which is evidenced by the recent Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification of the Yellow Perch and Walleye fisheries on Lake Erie.

The OCFA requests that you not support this proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me to further discuss this issue or if you have any questions.

Yours truly



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