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August 14, 2019

RE: Elevating Recreational Fishing to a National Priority Report

Kim Rhodes
President
Canadian Sportfishing Industry Association
171 Rink Street, Suite 102
Peterborough, ON

Dear Mr. Rhodes,

As Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus and a member of the Conservative Party Hunting and Angling Caucus, I understand the importance of recreational fishing to our nation's outdoor heritage, which is why I read your recently released report, 'Elevating Recreational Fishing to a National Priority', with great interest.

As you know, eight million Canadians fish recreationally, creating an industry worth over \$9 billion annually that supports over 100,000 jobs throughout the country. There is no doubt that recreational fishing plays a significant role in our Canadian identity and our national economy which is why I, along with my Conservative colleagues, are committed to working with the angling community to protect it. The issues laid out in your report are a vital part of this conversation and I am pleased to be able to offer my support to the work you have done and the recommendations provided.

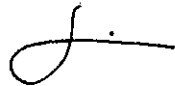
As outlined in your recommendations, I firmly believe that any decisions made with regards to environmentally sustainable natural resource use and marine protection must be based on scientific data and transparent consultation with all relevant stakeholders including CSIA. As we know, there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to conservation. Canada has decades of successful examples where partnerships between the recreational fishing industry, government biologists and concerned anglers have greatly benefitted fish populations and their aquatic environment. Oftentimes it is the local anglers themselves who volunteer time and effort to support and protect our public waters. Instead of shutting the door to these partnerships, we should be working with these experts, learning from their experiences and expertise, and using this knowledge to help to effectively protect our waterways from pollution, habitat loss and invasive species. I believe the announcement by our Leader Andrew Scheer that a Conservative government will re-establish the Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel and restore the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program will help to do just that.

I also support your recommendation that recreational fishing be declared as a sustainable use priority in all management plans. The reality is that recreational fishing bans do not have any environmental benefits and have only led to increasing concern and uncertainty about the future of fishing in Canada. Instead of ignoring our recreational fishing community when developing these plans, we must find a way to balance conserving marine habitats with protecting those who rely on recreational fishing and its growing popularity. Allocating federal budget funds to recreational fishing initiatives will also help to support the growth and sustainability of this important heritage activity.

With regards to foreign funding, I agree that it has no place in the decision-making process of the federal government. Any decisions about our nation's public waters must be based on science and free from the influence of those who do not have Canada's best interests at heart.

Again, I applaud the work you and your colleagues have done with regards to the 'Elevating Recreational Fishing to a National Priority' report. Rest assured, I will continue to fight to ensure the voices and concerns of those who fish recreationally are heard in Ottawa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J.' with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Bob Zimmer
Member of Parliament
Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies
Co-Chair, Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus