



SPORTFISHING DEFENCE ALLIANCE

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August 13, 2005

Honourable Irwin Cotler
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Government of Canada
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6 and:

Honourable Wally Oppal
Attorney General
Province of British Columbia
East Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
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Honourable Ministers:

I write to you today on behalf of the members of the Sportfishing Defence Alliance and many concerned anglers and citizens of British Columbia.

This afternoon I received the second reports in the last few days of illegal drift gillnetting and the threat to the well being and lives of the officers of Fisheries and Oceans Canada who were trying to enforce the law and protect the resource. These incidents are taking place in the Cheam fishing area immediately upstream of the Aggassiz/Rosedale Bridge in the Cheam Native Band fishing area.

Officers moving in to deal with the illegal operations are having their boats swamped, rammed and being swarmed by native persons and boats putting them very much in danger. In fact I am instructed that today they were forced to abandon their enforcement efforts due to the danger.

You two gentlemen have control and direction of the R.C.M.P. in this province and we are asking that you move immediately to have that agency take immediate action to protect and assist the Fishery Officers to carry out the law and protect the dwindling fish stocks currently in the river.

We would advise that failure on your part to take such action to control law breakers and protect enforcement staff will result in the death or serious injury to these brave people or a fish loss similar to what took place in 2004 in the Fraser River. That action means no fishing at all in 2008, a similar action this year would continue that disaster on into 2009 and possibly beyond.

A precious and extremely valuable natural resource, (capable of generating in excess of \$100 million annually for Canada and B.C.) lost for future generations. And; with the allowance by government, through lack of strong action, for anarchy to rule on the river, the assurance that future stocks and economic benefits will be lost from all other years in the cycle runs.

Time is of the essence and we urge you in the strongest possible terms to act forcefully and act NOW!

Yours in conservation:

Bill Otway, President
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