

MP's comments hurtful

**BY E.L. "NED" POTTINGER,
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Editor:

Re: DFO is controlling agenda of salmon inquiry, MP's Report, Dec. 18

We were dismayed to read John Cummins' column, particularly as it relates to the Pacific Salmon Foundation and our president and CEO, Dr. Brian Riddell.

For the record, the Pacific Salmon Foundation was created in 1987 as an independent, non-partisan charity to ensure a sustainable future for wild Pacific salmon in British Columbia and the Yukon. We provide grants to community salmon projects that are carried out by more than 35,000 volunteers throughout the province.

Our volunteer board has worked hard to build a competent and effective team with proven, capable delivery of volunteer-based projects. We hired Riddell to lead our team two years ago because he is an extremely capable scientist and manager. Riddell no longer works for the federal government, and has said on numerous occasions that he left government believing he could do more for salmon through the foundation.

Regarding Cummins' comments about government support for the foundation, in 2009, only 16 per cent (\$1.6 million) of the Pacific Salmon Foundation's revenue came from the federal government. Of that, about 20 per cent (\$289,027) was "government" in name only, as it was generated by the sale of federal Pacific Salmon Conservation Stamps -- a required purchase for any angler who wants to retain salmon in saltwater off B.C.

The conservation stamp funds have been directed to our flagship Community Salmon Program, which has granted more than \$8.5 million to 1,185 projects over 20 years (total funds from the conservation stamp and foundation contributions). The remaining investment has been matched by provincial dollars and, in combination, have funded 275 programs since 2006 to support communities and improved stewardship within the Fraser Basin.

It would be difficult to find an organization with a better record of making dollars stretch. On average, community groups have raised six dollars for every dollar received from our foundation. That's why the federal government has partnered with the Pacific Salmon Foundation for more than 20 years.

When elected representatives like Cummins question why government money is spent on the Pacific Salmon Foundation, they are really questioning the contributions of community organizations, tens of thousands of volunteers and hundreds of private donors.

We are proud of our support of B.C.'s salmon communities and will continue to work to improve conditions for Pacific salmon. We would hope a federal politician with Cummins' experience would be more helpful than critical of those efforts.

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Chairman,

Pacific Salmon Foundation

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