

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Re: Invasive Quagga and Zebra Mussels in the Okanagan Valley

WHEREAS Okanagan Lake is at very high risk for infestation of invasive mussels, particularly following the discovery of quagga mussels in a tributary of the Columbia River in Idaho;

AND WHEREAS an infestation of invasive mussels would cause significant economic and environmental losses, with economic losses alone estimated at \$64 million to \$129 million annually across the Province;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province of British Columbia take action on the Okanagan Basin Water Board's recommendations to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for invasive mussel prevention, dated September 25, 2023, including requesting the federal government enhance inspections, increasing funding and staffing for the Invasive Mussel Defence Program, introducing "pull-the-plug" legislation, and updating the provincial Early Detection, Rapid Response plan;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province of British Columbia work with the federal government to increase long-term funding and support to prevent invasive mussels from entering waterways in British Columbia.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2023, following news of quagga mussels being found in Idaho within an 11-hour drive of Osoyoos, the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) provided recommendations to the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship for mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery related to the high risk of invasive mussel infestation in the Okanagan watershed. These recommendations are to:

1. Ask the federal Minister of Public Safety to have the Canada Border Services Agency stop and inspect ALL watercraft coming to B.C. from the U.S., consistently at ALL border crossings from Saskatchewan to B.C.
2. Consider a temporary moratorium on out-of-province boats until the full status of the infestation of the Columbia Basin is assessed.
3. Commit funding of at least \$4 million per year for the Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP), indexed to inflation, for at least 10 years.
4. Enhance funding to recruit and retain B.C. Conservation Officers, Auxiliary Conservation Officers, and other IMDP staff as needed to 2019 levels (64 inspectors).
5. Introduce "pull-the-plug" legislation to be in effect prior to the 2024 boating season.
6. Promote vulnerability assessments by utilities, local jurisdictions, and private entities.
7. Update the provincial Early Detection, Rapid Response plan, including a round of consultation with partner organizations prior to finalization.

8. Lead a planning process to create long-term response, containment, and control plans in regions at high risk of introduction and vulnerable to infestation, including the Okanagan, Shuswap, and Kootenay Regions.

Long-term implications of and costs associated with invasive mussel infestations are outlined in the Ministry's report from May 2023: [Potential Economic Impact of Zebra and Quagga Mussels in B.C.](#)

Date: February 26, 2024