



Revelstoke, September 10, 2021

Honourable John Horgan, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier,

We are writing to express our grave concerns for the survival of steelhead stocks in British Columbia. In virtually all areas of the province, these priceless icons of BC's wild rivers are at the point of functional extinction.

The Province's own biologists project the Skeena area stocks to be the lowest in 66 years of record keeping. Fraser River interior stocks, particularly the "world-renowned" Thompson River stocks, are the lowest in 30 years with concerns they are beyond natural recovery. Wild stocks on Vancouver Island are virtually extinct now, with the winter count on the former prolific run on the Gold River at two fish! This is truly heartbreaking.

This slide to oblivion is not a recent concern. For decades the many groups representing public fishery and environmental organizations as well as Indigenous groups have sought government actions toward reversing the downward spiral. Despite numerous meetings, including a provincial emergency summit with biologists and stakeholders from all around the province, little effort has resulted in the tough decisions required to save the precious creatures.

The past twenty years have seen numerous meetings with the Province and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada blaming each other for the ongoing extinction. All stakeholders and Indigenous groups have offered support toward finding realistic solutions to save and rebuild the steelhead populations. Unfortunately, all our efforts appear in vain with little if any actual actions by those responsible for fisheries management. Critics could suggest a serious abdication of mandated responsibility towards stewarding steelhead in BC.

Of particular concern is the failure to act in a meaningful way on the solutions identified in the past "Provincial Steelhead Recovery Plan", which was the culmination of significant effort between provincial staff and the major groups representative of concerned BC recreational anglers. In March of this year, we were told a revised plan was forthcoming, but no details have been provided so far.

Solutions based on sound science have already been identified, and further exploratory meetings are not required. What is needed now is the tough but necessary decisions which may not be palatable to all sectors. We ask that you initiate the bold and necessary actions required to protect steelhead in BC for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration and actions toward saving this precious resource.

The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC is an umbrella organization composed of organizational members representing the broad and diverse spectrum of outdoor recreation user groups in BC, including paddlers, hikers, mountain bikers, off-road motorcyclists, equestrians, snowmobilers, quad riders, 4WDs, anglers and nature interests. We represent more than 100,000 British Columbians. Our vision is that recreation and outdoor places are valued as essential to healthy individuals and vibrant communities and that every British Columbian has access to meaningful outdoor recreation experiences. We work to promote and advocate for access to and responsible use of BC's outdoors for public recreation, build bridges between outdoor recreation groups and represent the broad interests of the public outdoor recreation community to government.

Sincerely,



Louise Pedersen

Executive Director | [Outdoor Recreation Council of BC](#)

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cc: Minister George Heyman, Minister Lana Popham, Parliamentary Secretary, Fin Donnelly, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Katrine Conroy and Minister of State, Nathan Cullen.