



# Statement

For Immediate Release

July 9, 2020

## **Okanagan MPs Call on Trudeau Government to Deliver Resources and Actions for Invasive Species Prevention in B.C.**

Today, Mel Arnold (Member of Parliament for North Okanagan-Shuswap and Shadow Minister for Fisheries, Oceans), Dan Albas (M.P. for Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola) and Tracy Gray (M.P. for Kelowna-Lake Country) issued the following statement calling on the Trudeau government to increase federal resources for invasive species prevention in British Columbia:

“For over four years, the Trudeau government has failed to equitably distribute federal resources for invasive species prevention across Canada. The vast majority of federal resources allotted for preventing or eradicating aquatic invasive species (AIS), including zebra and quagga mussels (ZQM), do not make it past the Great Lakes giving Western Canada, including British Columbia, little access to federal supports.

“The Trudeau government continues to ignore the major ecologic and economic threats that AIS pose to British Columbia’s waters and economy. COVID-19 travel restrictions are increasing these threats as our region sees more visitors and boats from across Canada coming to the Okanagan.

“This week, we sent a joint letter to the Minister of Fisheries requesting that she work with her cabinet colleagues to ensure national domestic tourism promotions remind Canadians of what their responsibilities are for helping prevent AIS proliferation while travelling across Canada. We also asked that the federal pleasure watercraft licensing program include more information on AIS prevention.

“We also sent a letter to the Minister of Public Safety citing the ‘Alaska Loophole’ that allows U.S. citizens to transit through Canada to Alaska and asked that the Canada Border Services Agency ensure that all watercraft and related equipment be inspected and treated at the border as if they will be used in Canadian waters before they are granted entry. We also informed the ministers to recent reports from officials in Montana where the state AIS detection program has seen a significant increase in the number of ZQM-fouled watercraft inspected by their program.

“British Columbia’s waters are one of our greatest natural resources and we will continue to press the Trudeau government for an equitable share of federal resources for AIS prevention and also call for timely and effective actions to protect and conserve our waters for the sake of the wildlife, people and communities that depend on them.”