



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-02294**

BY: **MR. DONNELLY (PORT MOODY-COQUITLAM)**

DATE: **APRIL 30, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **TERRY BEECH**

Response by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Species at risk

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada shares Canadians' concerns around declining returns of the Interior Fraser Steelhead Trout. We also understand that food, social and ceremonial (FSC), recreational and commercial fishing is economically and culturally important for Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders and communities across British Columbia, and that Canadians want to see Steelhead Trout conserved for future generations.

Under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) emergency listing provisions, any person who considers that there is an imminent threat to the survival of a species may apply to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) for an emergency assessment. The application for assessment must include relevant information indicating that there is an imminent threat to the survival of the species. The current request for an emergency assessment, and supporting information, was specific to the Thompson River and Chilcotin River populations. In response to this request, COSEWIC conducted an emergency assessment (published February 13, 2018) and found both populations to be endangered. On April 9, 2018, Response Statements were posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry that contain high level information on the next course of action as well as a summary of current conservation activities.

Under the emergency listing process, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change must first form an opinion on the imminent threat to the species in question. That opinion may be based on the emergency assessment from COSEWIC or

on the basis of their own information. Before forming an opinion, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is required to consult with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, as the competent minister for aquatic species under the *Species at Risk Act*. Should the Minister of Environment and Climate Change form the opinion that there is an imminent threat to one or both populations of Steelhead Trout, they must recommend that it be listed as endangered to the Governor in Council (GiC). The GiC is responsible for making the final emergency listing decision based on the recommendation of the Minister and other considerations such as socio-economic impacts and results of consultations with Indigenous Peoples and stakeholders.

In the emergency assessment, COSEWIC identified the main threats to Steelhead Trout as being: reduced marine survival, bycatch in Pacific salmon gillnet and purse seine fisheries, and, declining freshwater habitat quality. COSEWIC is expected to conduct a full assessment of Steelhead Trout in the coming years, independently of the outcome of this current emergency listing process.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada has reviewed the COSEWIC emergency assessments and is now considering additional scientific information to complement the assessments, including any Indigenous Knowledge that might be shared by Indigenous Groups.