



RESPONSE TO PETITION

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

PETITION No.: **421-00493**

BY: **Ms. MAY (SAANICH—GULF ISLANDS)**

DATE: **JUNE 14, 2016**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SERGE CORMIER**

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

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Protection of the environment

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), is committed to the conservation and protection of marine mammals and working with tourism operators, aboriginal and environmental organizations and other government departments to educate Canadians about marine mammal conservation while providing opportunities for Canadians to learn about marine mammal life in the wild.

Southern Resident Killer Whales are listed as Endangered under the Canadian *Species At Risk Act* and as a result receive special protection from harassment under Canadian law. The Department has published, on its website, "Whale Watching Tips for Boaters" to help ensure the public enjoys wildlife encounters but also reduces the risk of disturbing marine mammals. In addition, DFO, along with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Pacific Whale Watch Association and others have developed minimum distance guidelines for vessels.

The Department is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the *Marine Mammal Regulations* under the Fisheries Act, which prohibit the disturbance of marine mammals, including Southern Resident Killer Whales, and can be used to address, in part, the effects of repetitive exposure and interaction with humans which may interrupt or prevent marine mammals from completing normal life processes (e.g., mating, calving and nursing), cause habituation of the animals with human activities, and threaten the overall survival of individual animals. The Department also works closely

with other jurisdictions and non-government organizations to develop and provide education and outreach activities and programs related to mitigating the impacts of human activities on marine mammals (e.g. Be Whale Wise).