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AUG 12 2016

Mr. Scott Simms, M. P.
Chair, Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Simms,

On behalf of the Government of Canada, we would like to thank the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (the Committee) for its study and subsequent *Report on the Closure of the Comox Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centre*, released May 6, 2016.

We are pleased to receive the Committee's recommendations concerning the closure of Coast Guard's Comox Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) Centre and we note that the recommendations are consistent with the scope and intent of the project to upgrade Coast Guard's communications equipment and its consolidation of MCTS Centres across the country. As noted in the study from the Committee, the Coast Guard's role in the safety of mariners is paramount and is supported in large part by the men and women working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, at its MCTS Centres to assist mariners in distress along with vessel traffic services. Admittedly, the MCTS Modernization and Consolidation project has experienced some technical issues, but we would like to assure the Committee that the Coast Guard fully accepts the intent of the recommendations and respects the requirement for quarterly post-consolidation reports as well as the annual risk assessment report for the MCTS consolidation project in the Western Region.

During the implementation period of the Consolidation and Modernization of MCTS Centres, Coast Guard rectified issues as they arose and ensured other Centres could benefit from the resolution or expertise gained. To further illustrate CCG's commitment to the Committee's recommendations, CCG will publish its first report on the CCG website in October 2016. It will address the four concerns expressed by the Committee in Recommendations 1, 2, 4, and 5: working conditions, staffing levels, recruitment, and communications outages.


Every three months thereafter for 24 months, the Committee and the public can expect an update to this initial post-consolidation report on the CCG website, thereby assuring Canadians that the MCTS system on the west coast of Canada continues to provide key services as advertised and that any outages or service interruptions are addressed quickly. For the CCG, the safety of mariners is always paramount, and this response also reflects the openness and transparency that Canadians have come to expect from government activities and operations.

Recommendation 3 has already been addressed in that the operations of the Comox MCTS Centre was effectively transferred to the Victoria MCTS Centre on May 10, 2016, with little issue.

Recommendation 6, which ensures the performance of the CCG MCTS program is included in the Department's Performance Report is also supported. This recommendation will be incorporated into the department's overall strategy to report to parliament on its outcomes and performance.

Once again, we would like to thank the Committee for the study of the closure of the Comox MCTS Centre and those that participated as witnesses and provided input into the study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. LeBlanc', written in a cursive style.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P.