



February 25, 2026

The Honourable Joanne Thompson  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Ottawa, ON

**Recommendations for a Balanced, Science-Based and Economically Responsible Renewal of the Salmon Allocation Policy**

Dear Minister Thompson,

On behalf of the South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition (SVIAC), we are writing to express our serious concern regarding the direction of the current Salmon Allocation Policy (SAP) review and the potential implications for public access, coastal economies, and long term conservation outcomes.

SVIAC would like to affirm our respect for the Constitution of Canada and the recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal and treaty rights under section 35. We acknowledge the 2018 decision of the British Columbia Supreme Court, which found aspects of the SAP inconsistent with constitutionally protected Aboriginal fishing rights and directed the Department to address those deficiencies. We support reconciliation and recognize the Minister's constitutional responsibilities in this regard.

At the same time, we believe that renewal of the Salmon Allocation Policy must be carefully structured to ensure that conservation outcomes, economic sustainability, Indigenous rights, and reasonable public access to fishery resources are balanced in a fair and transparent manner.

The recreational fishery in British Columbia represents one of the broadest forms of public participation in fisheries resources in Canada. It includes hundreds of thousands of licensed anglers and supports tens of thousands of jobs across guiding operations, marinas, boat sales, equipment retailers, hospitality providers, tourism operators, and associated service industries.

On Vancouver Island and throughout coastal British Columbia, recreational fishing is a foundational social, cultural, and economic activity. Tens of thousands of multi-generational, non-Indigenous Canadian families also rely on the salmon harvested by recreational anglers each year as an important source of food, while also maintaining a vital connection to family traditions and community identity.

In many coastal communities, the recreational fishery also helps sustain critical marine infrastructure, including marinas, boat launches, maintenance services, and local marine businesses, that are relied upon by all sectors of the fishery. Further significant reductions in recreational fishing opportunity would have immediate ripple effects across small businesses, tourism operators, and local employment throughout the region.

**South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition Society**



SVIAC is deeply concerned that the current public narrative surrounding the SAP review frames the recreational fishery as largely unmanaged and disproportionately responsible for pressures on salmon stocks. This does not reflect current regulatory realities.

Over the past decade, recreational fisheries have been subject to:

- Marked Selective Fisheries (MSF) restrictions
- Reduced retention limits
- Non-retention periods
- Area closures
- Size restrictions
- Seasonal delays
- Mandatory licensing and reporting requirements
- Intensive creel and dockside monitoring

In many areas, the recreational sector continues to experience ongoing substantial reductions in fishery opportunity.

SVIAC recognizes the importance of viable Indigenous and non-Indigenous Commercial fisheries. However, the solution to rebuilding Commercial viability cannot simply be the reallocation of harvest opportunity away from the recreational sector.

SVIAC supports the principle that Conservation must remain the first priority. We also maintain that addressing habitat degradation, climate impacts, predation, interception fisheries, and stock rebuilding strategies, must also remain central and be considered in the policy renewal.

We are very concerned about proposals to remove or redefine principles such as public access or “common property resource” in a way that could unintentionally erode public confidence in fisheries governance. While public access is currently granted through recreational fishing licenses and regulated by the Minister under the Fisheries Act, maintaining meaningful public participation in the fisheries is essential to long term conservation support.

Recreational anglers are not passive participants in the fishery. They fund salmon conservation through license purchases, conservation stamps and private fundraising initiatives. They volunteer in hatcheries and habitat restoration projects, and serve as strong advocates for salmon ecosystem protection. Weakening this constituency risks undermining one of the strongest grassroots conservation networks in British Columbia.

As the SAP review proceeds, we respectfully request that Fisheries and Oceans Canada:

1. Conduct and publish a transparent socio-economic impact assessment of proposed SAP changes across all sectors and communities.

**South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition Society**



2. Ensure that recognition of Indigenous rights is implemented in a manner that is consistent with conservation, economic stability, and continued public access.
3. Avoid disproportionate reductions in the recreational fishery that could further destabilize coastal economies.
4. Commence structured engagement with recreational organizations and community-based groups such as SVIAC, PFA, SFIBC and BCWF before final policy decisions are made.

To reiterate our position ... SVIAC supports reconciliation. We support conservation. We support sustainable fisheries across all sectors. We cannot support a policy shift that risks significant economic harm and erosion of public access to the fishery.

We respectfully urge careful and balanced consideration as the Salmon Allocation Policy is reviewed and modernized.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or departmental officials to discuss these issues further.

Respectfully,

Bill Campbell  
President  
South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition  
250-818-6367

cc

Hon. Stephanie McLean – Liberal MP – Esquimalt - Saanich – Sooke  
Hon. Jeff Kibble – Conservative MP – Cowichan – Malahat - Langford  
Hon. Clifford Small, Conservative Shadow Minister for Fisheries, Oceans  
Hon. Mel Arnold – Conservative MP - North Okanagan—Shuswap, British Columbia  
Hon. Rick Perkins - Conservative MP - South Shore—St. Margarets  
Hon. Bob Zimmer- Conservative MP - Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies

**South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition Society**