

## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**TO:** Environment and Infrastructure Committee

**FROM:** J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** February 20, 2025

**RE:** Request for a Letter of Support for Calls to Action regarding the Invasive Mussel Defense Program

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### **Administrative Recommendation:**

THAT The Board of Directors provide a letter of support be forwarded to the BC Minister of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship supporting the Calls to Action related to the Invasive Mussel Defense Program and changes to the BC Wildlife Act currently under review.

### **Purpose:**

The Okanagan Basin Water Board has distributed an urgent request for support to all local government and non-government partners across the Southern Interior.

### **Reference:**

Invasive Mussel Prevention Calls to Action 2025

### **Background:**

One of the most urgent issues we face across the province is preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species, particularly invasive mussels. The B.C. Invasive Mussel Defence Program (IMDP) has been underfunded and understaffed for years, despite being critical to protecting B.C.'s economy and freshwater ecosystems. Without this program, invasive mussels would cause significant damage to ecosystems, fisheries, and drinking water systems, costing the province hundreds of millions annually.

We are especially concerned about the discovery of golden mussels in California, which can survive in calcium-poor waters, posing a new risk to all regions of B.C. The threat has never been greater, but the preventative actions remain the same.

### **Financial Implications:**

Increasing funding for preventative action from both Provincial and Federal governments would directly benefit our region. This letter of support has no financial impact to the RDOS.

**Alternatives:**

THAT the Board of Directors not provide a letter of support.

**Communication Strategy:**

The letter of support will be sent to the Minister of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship office.

**Respectfully submitted:**

"Shelley Fiorito"

S. Fiorito, Projects Coordinator

**Endorsed by:**

"Liisa Bloomfield"

L. Bloomfield, Senior Manager of Public Works

**Endorsed by:**



A. Fillion, Managing Director, Dev. &  
Infrastructure