



Trout Unlimited Canada

To conserve, protect and restore
Canada's freshwater ecosystems
and coldwater resources for
current and future generations

March 14, 2012

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Parliamentary Office
House of Commons
Room 107, Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

By fax: (613) 996-9955

Attention: Hon. Keith Ashfield, Minister

Subject: Potential amendments to section 35 of the *Fisheries Act*

Dear Minister Ashfield,

We write to express our grave concern over the potential amendments to section 35 the *Fisheries Act* which have been reported in the media over the past few days. The reported amendments would effectively end the regulatory protection of fresh water fish habitat by your department.

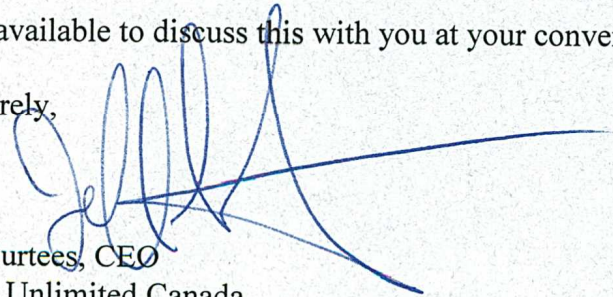
We fully support modernization of the *Fisheries Act* and we support changes which are aimed and greater regulatory efficiencies, so long as the changes result in better conservation outcomes. In our view, the amendments which have been reported do not do that.

In January, you wrote to me and said "I would like to reassure you that DFO will continue to play a pivotal role in the conservation and protection of fish habitat in Canada. The Department recognizes that natural and diverse populations of fish in combination with healthy and productive habitats are essential to sustaining the biological diversity, integrity, health and productivity of Canada's aquatic ecosystems." A copy of your letter is attached.

The amendments which have been reported, if passed into law, would set the protection of fish habitat in Canada back thirty-five years. Without protecting habitat it is not possible to safeguard Canada's fisheries.

I am available to discuss this with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Jeff Surtees, CEO
Trout Unlimited Canada



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

JAN 11 2012

Mr. Jeff Surtees
Chief Executive Officer
Trout Unlimited Canada
Suite 160 - 6712 Fisher Street SE
Calgary, Alberta
T2H 2A7

Dear Mr. Surtees:

Thank you for your correspondence of December 1, 2011, concerning Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO's) management and protection of fish habitat.

I would like to reassure you that DFO will continue to play a pivotal role in the conservation and protection of fish habitat in Canada. The Department recognizes that natural and diverse populations of fish in combination with healthy and productive habitats are essential to sustaining the biological diversity, integrity, health and productivity of Canada's aquatic ecosystems.

Currently, DFO spends a major portion of its habitat management resources providing full reviews, advice and authorizations to development projects that may impact fish habitat. By publishing operational guidelines and consistent national standards, project proponents will be aware of what is required to protect fish habitat, and can include protection measures into their plans at the earliest stages. This streamlining allows DFO to focus its resources on higher risk projects that require more oversight and monitoring.

DFO will strengthen its capacity to protect fish habitat by establishing clear national standards and guidance for proponents wishing to submit development projects. The national standards and guidance provided will be based on best available science. As a result, proponents will be able to develop proposals that are more comprehensive, aligned with standards at the outset, and can be evaluated for compliance more efficiently and consistently.

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DFO will continue to seek efficiencies by letting Canadians know up front what is required to protect fish habitat. We will also seek to establish more of an enabling environment and develop even closer relationships with groups such as Trout Unlimited.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Keith Ashfield".

Keith Ashfield