

Dear **[insert MP name]**,

I am writing concerning Bill C-55 and the current amendments being proposed to Canada's *Oceans Act*.

Bill C-55 and the current amendments to the *Oceans Act* proposed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, do not go far enough in providing effective protection for Canada's *Oceans Act* marine protected areas.

Our oceans are in trouble and they need our help more than ever. The amendments currently proposed will not do nearly enough to protect against the damages caused by harmful oil and gas exploration, the habitat loss incurred due to bottom trawling, and the ecological integrity being threatened by open net-pen aquaculture.

Furthermore, unprotected oceans are threatening the livelihoods of Canadian citizens in coastal communities that rely on healthy fish stocks. Overfishing is currently the largest threat to our oceans and with no minimum protection standards regarding unsustainable fishing practices in MPAs, millions of Canadian families are being put at risk.

Setting the bar too low compromises the quality of marine protection and will not effectively serve either ecosystems or communities.

Scientists agree that oil and gas and mineral extraction activities are incompatible with the conservation objectives of MPAs. Scientific evidence clearly demonstrates that bottom trawling has significant damaging impacts to seafloor ecosystems, and that 'no-take' fishing areas are a key component of effective MPAs.

As strong biodiversity conservation outcomes are the purpose of protected areas, it is imperative that Bill C-55 be amended to include strong minimum protection standards for all MPAs created under the *Oceans Act*.

An enhanced robust *Oceans Act* including minimum protection standards regarding oil and gas exploration, bottom trawling, and open net-pen aquaculture would offer lasting protection for oceans species and the habitats in which they depend. The requirement of "no-take zones" is another essential component that must be included in the *Oceans Act* amendments. A minimum of 75% of every *Oceans Act* MPA should be closed to all commercial and recreational fishing and harvesting activities.

In addition, the *Oceans Act* should reflect the federal governments commitments to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and working towards reconciliation and co-governance with Canada's Indigenous Peoples. This is an opportunity for Canada to start reconciling these broken relationships and take a lead role in designing new legislative provisions for Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas.

Being firm in these amendments is imperative to ensure Canada reaches its marine targets by 2020 and remains an international leader in ocean management.

Thank you for your time and all the hard work you have put forward thus far in your commitment to Canadian citizens.

Sincerely,

**[insert your name]**