

Appendix C

**Letter to Minister responsible for
Department of Fisheries and Oceans**

The Honourable Joyce Murray, PC, MP
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
200 Kent Street
Station 15N100
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Murray,

Canada can and must better integrate the oceans into climate policy as well as center climate change in the creation and implementation of the Blue Economy Strategy, in order to ensure the success of each. While the oceans, marine ecosystems and dependent human communities are impacted by climate change, the oceans also offer many climate solutions.

Achieving the 2050 net-zero emissions target, as outlined in the 2021 Government of Canada's Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, and Canada's engagement in the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue under the UNFCCC will require coordinated efforts within and among government ministries. Currently, the critical roles of ocean economic sectors, and their importance to protecting and maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems, are incompletely addressed in emissions reductions plans.

This past week, the Tula Foundation's Ocean Decade Collaborative Center for the Northeast Pacific, UBC Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries and UBC School of Public Policy and Global Affairs co-convened a workshop to explore the opportunity to identify and address gaps in Federal climate and emissions reductions plans. The workshop brought together 32 ocean climate experts in Canada with combined 400+ years of expertise in ocean and climate science, and engineering and representing academic, NGO and government sectors to discuss how we might advance more comprehensive ocean-climate planning, adaptation and mitigation in Canada, while ensuring the oceans are healthy, productive and resilient for generations to come. The following represent the key outcomes from this workshop, and participants expressed their desire to share this work with you without delay.

The participants identified some shared principles in exploring and implementing ocean-based climate solutions: The participants urge your ministry and Canada to pursue an approach based on:

- ocean and climate optimism;
- science;
- conservation of ecosystems and its multiple co-benefits as a key part of the solution.
- the protection of Indigenous communities' rights of harvest and cultural practice;

That:

- places people and communities at the center (equity, inclusion, justice);
- supports economic opportunities while reducing emissions, removing carbon from the atmosphere, and repairing ecosystems;
- increases ambition and urgently delivers strong and sustained mitigation and adaptation outcomes;
- and generates co-benefits for people while enhancing biodiversity outcomes;

The participants also highlighted four priority areas to enable the inclusion of the ocean in climate mitigation and adaptation:

1. Improved Coordination across Government of Canada and Internationally

- Approach needs to be connected across Ministries: improved coordination across federal departments to integrate ocean-climate across all policies;
- Federal government should provide leadership and incentivize provincial and local, including Indigenous, governments to integrate blue economy investments and climate change policies;
- Emissions Reductions Plans need to comprehensively account for marine industries. We support an integrated pathway through which the marine sector contributes to achieving net-zero emissions;
- The contribution and future potential of ocean ecosystems to blue carbon needs to be included in the national carbon accounting;
- Incentives for marine industries need to be clearly articulated and the sectoral emissions reductions targets for marine economic sectors must be clearly identified;
- When it is next revised, Canada's Nationally-Determined Contributions should comprehensively include coastal, ocean and marine industries.

2. Positioning Canada's Blue Economy for growth and success in the face of climate change and reduce emissions to meet Net-Zero goals

- Canada's Blue Economy Strategy must be a net-zero strategy.
- Oil and Gas moratorium: We commend the government on current moratoria. Now, despite Baie du Nord approval, we recommend the phase-out of fossil fuel exploration, and a commitment to no new projects after 2030;
- Remove any existing fuel subsidies from marine sectors and instead incentivize industry-wide fuel-switching/electrification;
- Rapid scale-up of marine renewables, in particular for diesel-dependent remote and Indigenous communities;
- Take steps to reduce dependence on international shipping by shoring up and strengthening domestic supply chains;
- Take leadership in marine shipping and other industries (switch fuels, calculate and make transparent the emissions arising from marine industries).

3. Protect and restore marine ecosystems to sustain and enhance adaptive capacity and sustainable economic activities

- Moratorium on deep-sea mining in Canada's EEZ to demonstrate precautionary principle: provide support for research to better/further understand the complexity of deep sea ecosystems;
- Minimize the impacts of fishing, particularly bottom trawling, on ecosystems' carbon storage and sequestration potential;
- Reduce fishery catches to levels that safeguard food webs and carbon sequestration processes;
- Increase investment in Marine Protected Areas, beyond the level currently budgeted to achieve 30% by 2030, to safeguard marine ecosystems and provide resilience, adaptive capacity and

insurance in the face of climate change, as well as avoid release of carbon due to industrial, fishing and other anthropogenic impacts on the seabed.

- Ensure that Marine Protected Areas include offshore areas and adequate adjustments in order to maintain ecosystem integrity in changing climate.
- The Canadian government, guided by UNDRIPA (2019) and the TRC Calls to Action, has a responsibility to respect and protect First Nations' and Indigenous communities' rights of harvest and cultural practice;
- Protect and restore coastal, estuarine and wetlands habitats on all coasts, including kelp forests, seagrass meadows and salt marshes among others, and make stronger connections between land-use and coastal management priorities.

4. **Invest in R&D for nascent climate reduction technologies and nature-based solutions**

- Provide guidelines and support for safe experimentation of ocean-based carbon capture and sequestration that are in early development but could have impact at scale;
- Investigate and quantify the carbon-capture potential and other climate and non-climate co-benefits of nature-based solutions to climate change.

We suggest that the federal government set up an across multi-ministerial task force (between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada) to facilitate the development of strategies that integrate the oceans into climate policy as well as center climate change in the creation and implementation of the Blue Economy Strategy.

We will be delighted to share with you a full workshop report that further explains the above principles and priorities. The report is currently in preparation, and will be provided to you upon its publication.

Sincerely,

William Cheung and Rashid Sumaila (UBC),
Rebecca Martone and Kathryn Sheps (Ocean Decade Collaborative Centre for the Northeast Pacific),
on behalf of:

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Julia Baum, University of Victoria
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