



Association of
SUMMER VILLAGES
OF ALBERTA

November 10, 2014

Honourable Kyle Fawcett
Minister
Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Legislature Office
420 Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
Canada T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Fawcett:

Re: Resolution ASVA 2014-01
Dreissenid Mussel Invasion

The Association of Summer Villages of Alberta (ASVA), one of the 3 municipal associations (AUMA, AAMDC, and ASVA) in the province, held their annual convention October 17 – 18th this year in Edmonton. At that time four resolutions were voted on by the membership.

There was strong support for Resolution ASVA 2014-01 dealing with the high risk of a potential invasion of Dreissenid Mussels into Alberta.

This resolution, as attached, was approved by the ASVA membership and is being forwarded to you for your consideration and response.

Sincerely,

ASSOCIATION OF SUMMER VILLAGES OF ALBERTA

Peter Pellatt
President



Association of
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OF ALBERTA

ASVA Resolution – 2014 – 01

Dreissenid Mussel Invasion

Sponsor: Summer Village of Rochon Sands

WHEREAS Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development estimates that a dreissenid mussel (quagga and zebra mussels) invasion into Alberta water bodies could have a detrimental \$75 million annual impact on the Alberta economy;

WHEREAS a zebra or quagga mussel infestation could devastate the pristine nature of Alberta's lakes and streams, rendering them unusable for recreation;

WHEREAS the economic impact targets many other aspects of the economy including but not limited to drinking water systems, water diversion intakes, water management structures and power generation;

WHEREAS the annual cost of preventing the invasion of this species is much less than the annual cost of mitigating the damages after an invasion;

WHEREAS these mussels are listed as prohibited species in Alberta's Fisheries Act but current provincial measures are not sufficient to ensure the species does not invade provincial water bodies; and

WHEREAS zebra mussels are migrating closer to Alberta and have been found as close as Lake Winnipeg, increasing the urgency to address this situation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Summer Village Association urge the provincial government to enact/amend legislation and/or regulations to encompass zero tolerance, mandatory inspections and the necessary enforcement authority for dreissenid mussels to ensure the species does not invade Alberta.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Alberta Summer Village Association urge the provincial government to take preventative measures including the establishment, funding and staffing of mussel inspection stations at strategic entrances into Alberta and the funding of a comprehensive awareness campaign on the risk of the species entering the province and the preventative measures boaters must take to eliminate the risk.



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Background

Dreissenid mussels include both zebra mussels and quagga mussels. These non-native species are native to Eastern Europe and it is thought that they were introduced into North America on ocean ships through the St. Lawrence Seaway. They are spreading throughout the parts of the United States and eastern Canada with zebra mussels found in Lake Winnipeg in October 2013.

These mussels filter organisms out of water altering the food chain in turn threatening existing native species. They also cling on to any solid object accumulating to the point that they clog up municipalities' water intake pipes and irrigation infrastructure. A serious enough infestation would cover our beaches with sharp shells, rendering them unusable, and cause our water bodies to become devoid of fish, causing a major impact to the value of these pristine areas and to tourism for the entire Province.

If introduced into Alberta it is estimated that the financial impact to mitigate damages will be \$75 million annually including \$20,839,921 to drinking water systems.

These mussels are listed as prohibited species in the Alberta Fisheries Act but diligence in enforcement is lacking. When inspection stations have been set up, the requirement for the inspections is voluntary with many Canadians opting not to have their boats inspected. On the other hand, Americans at Alberta inspection stops are more likely to agree to the inspections as they are mandatory in some states. In fact, inspections in the United States in 2013 alerted the Province that seven boats contaminated with the mussels were headed for lakes in Alberta.

Alberta tested for the mussels in some water bodies in 2013 and has carried out pilot boat inspections at certain border locations. They continued with this program in 2014. This is not enough, however, as inspections are voluntary as noted earlier. A more diligent approach backed by strong legislation is required along with funding for inspection stations. Funding education campaigns is also important in preventing these mussels from entering Alberta. Boaters need to be aware of the risks that these mussels pose and the steps that they can take to ensure they are not contaminating our lakes.

Spending money on these precautionary methods is much less expensive on an annual basis than having to enter the mitigation phase and with these mussels already in Manitoba it is now that the Province must act.