



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION NO.: **421-02985**

BY: **MR. MACGREGOR (COWICHAN-MALAHAT-LANGFORD)**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 28, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE CATHERINE MCKENNA**

Response by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Protection of the environment

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

PARKS CANADA

A part of the mandate assigned under legislation to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Minister responsible for Parks Canada oversees the development of the Agency's programs and services to protect and conserve Canada's natural and cultural heritage, to ensure that Canadians can discover protected sites across the country and learn more about Canadian environment and culture. In addition, the Prime Minister has entrusted the Minister of Environment and Climate Change with the mandate to work with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, to increase the proportion of Canada protected marine and coastal areas to 5 percent by 2017 and 10 percent by 2020. On October 28, 2017, the Ministers announced that Canada has protected 5.22 percent of its marine and coastal areas, surpassing the 2017 target. Protection efforts have continued since then, and as of June 27, 2018, Canada is at 7.9 percent.

Parks Canada is responsible for the establishment and management of national parks, national marine conservation areas (NMCAs) and national historic sites. The goal of these programs is to represent the diversity of Canada's terrestrial and marine environments, as well as its history and culture.

The objectives of the NMCA program are to establish a system of marine protected areas representative of the ecological diversity of Canada's Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific oceans, as well as its Great Lakes, and to encourage public understanding and enjoyment of this marine heritage among Canadians. The *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*, which can be accessed at www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-7.3/index.html, provides the legislative framework for the program.

NMCAs consist of highly protected zones surrounded by multiple-use areas where activities such as commercial fishing and shipping are appropriate. The guiding principle is ecological sustainability, and the Act prohibits waste disposal, mining, oil and gas exploration, and exploitation throughout these areas.

The long-term goal is to represent each of Canada's 29 marine regions with at least one NMCA. Currently, there are 4 sites in the NMCA system, representing 5 of the 29 regions: Fathom Five National Marine Park and Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area in Ontario, Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park in Quebec, and Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site in British Columbia. The feasibility assessment for an NMCA in Lancaster Sound in the Eastern Arctic has been completed. On August 14, 2017, the governments of Canada and Nunavut, along with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, announced that the three parties had agreed on the boundary and interim protection measures, and to take the next steps to complete the establishment of the NMCA—to be called Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area. Feasibility assessments are under way for two other proposed sites: the southern Strait of Georgia in British Columbia and the Îles de la Madeleine in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Parks Canada is the lead federal agency for the NMCA reserve proposal in the southern Strait of Georgia, within the Strait of Georgia marine region. The Agency already protects Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, and is working to expand marine protection through the national marine conservation area reserve proposal. This marine area is a very rich marine ecosystem with great importance for Indigenous Peoples, Canadians and people from around the world who connect with this unique marine environment and who have a shared interest in the ecological sustainability of the marine region.

Parks Canada and the Province of British Columbia are working together on a feasibility assessment for this proposed NMCA reserve, in collaboration with nineteen regional First Nations, local governments, non-governmental organizations, local communities and many other stakeholders. In 2011, a Statement of Intent was signed between the governments of Canada and British Columbia which identified a proposed boundary subject to further consultation and committed to the completion of the feasibility assessment. Currently, discussions are under way with many of the First Nations in preparation for formal consultation. In addition, preliminary discussions are underway with environmental groups, other levels of government, industry and local stakeholders.