

Blue Sea, 3 March 2016  
(By email)

Mr. Denis Charron, Mayor of Aumond  
Mr. Laurent Fortin, Mayor of Blue Sea  
Ms. Julie Jolivette, Mayor of Bois-Franc  
Mr. Réjean Major, Mayor of Bouchette  
Ms. Chantal Lamarche, Mayor of Cayamant  
Mr Bernard Cayen, Mayor of Déléage  
Mr. Gaétan Guindon, Mayor of Denholm  
Mr. Neil Gagnon, Mayor of Egan-sud  
Ms. Joanne Poulin, Mayor of Gracefield  
Mr. Gérard Coulombe, Mayor of Grand-Remous  
Ms. Ota Hora, Mayor of Kazabazua  
Mr. Gary Lachappelle, Mayor of Lac-Sainte-Marie  
Mr. Morris O'Connor, Mayor of Low  
Mr. Robert Coulombe, Mayor of Maniwaki  
Mr. Ronald Cross, Mayor of Messines  
Mr. Alain Fortin, Mayor of Montcerf-Lytton  
Mr. André Carle, Mayor of Sainte-Thérèse-de-la-Gatineau

**Subject: Protecting our Waterways Against Aquatic Invasive Species**

Honourable Mayors of the MRC de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau:

As you are aware, there has been a significant deterioration in the health of many regional lakes during the past twenty years. Since the mid-90s, many of our lakes have experienced blue-green algae blooms, Eurasian milfoil infestation, the loss of spawning beds, and a dramatic increase in aquatic biomass. This degradation of our waterways is due primarily to the inflow of excessive nutrients and to the introduction and proliferation of aquatic invasive species.

Although the MRC VG and its municipalities have tried to address the inflow of excessive nutrients through the implementation of the RCI 2009-206 and the mandatory emptying of septic tanks, very little has been done to confront the threat posed by aquatic

invasive species. Numerous lakes - including Blue Sea, 31 Mile, Pemichangan, and Cayamant - have already been infested with Eurasian milfoil to the point where eradication of this invasive species is no longer feasible. Despite the fact that some lakes have already lost the battle against Eurasian milfoil, we must do all we can to help stop the spread of this very harmful plant to other lakes within the region, and to protect our waterways against other invasive species that are on our doorstep, invasive species like rusty crayfish, water chestnuts, phragmites, and zebra mussels. The last is a particularly nasty threat, one to which several lakes<sup>1</sup> within our region are highly susceptible due to their high pH and calcium levels.

We strongly believe that a comprehensive region-wide program to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species must be established. Given that the principal means by which such species are disseminated is the movement of boats from one waterway to another (both within and across regional boundaries), such a program should focus on educating the boating public regarding the threat posed by invasive species and the action boaters must take to help prevent their spread. In this regard, we are very pleased that "Le Regroupement pour la protection de l'eau de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau" has volunteered to undertake a regional invasive species education and awareness campaign.

A comprehensive invasive species program must also comprise a variety of other measures to protect those lakes that are at the greatest risk. Such measures - supported by an appropriate regulatory framework - should include a mandatory inspection, boat rinsing, and access control system. To get a better idea of the types of measures required, we would encourage you to review what other municipalities in Québec have done to protect their lakes.

We have been advised that the Mayors of Cayamant and Blue Sea have already proposed that the MRC VG adopt a regional solution to the threat posed by aquatic invasive species. We urge you to support this initiative and thereby help prevent the further deterioration of our waterways.

We know that the region is facing a challenging financial situation. However, *unless more is done now to protect our lakes from aquatic invasive species, the MRC VG's tourist and cottage industries will suffer irreparable economic and environmental damage which will further harm the financial viability of our rural communities.* Accordingly we urge the MRC to adopt a

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<sup>1</sup> According to the government-funded 1993-1995 Biorex study, the pH and calcium levels of Blue Sea, William, 31 Mile, Truite (à la), and Pemichangan are ideal for zebra mussel propagation

comprehensive, region-wide program to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species which would include:

- A. the implementation of public education and awareness programs; and
- B. the development and implementation of a regulatory framework and any additional measures required to defend against aquatic invasive species.

We would be pleased to assist in developing a plan to establish such measures and the supporting regulations.

This letter represents the position of and is endorsed by the watershed/lake association authorities detailed hereunder:

Hugues Joanis, *President of the Association du lac Quinn (Aumond)*

Alphée Moreau, *President of the Association pour la protection du lac Murray (Aumond)*

Morris Richardson, *President of the Association pour la protection de l'environnement du Lac Latourelle (Blue Sea)*

Paul Dénommé, *President of the Association des villégiateurs du lac Allard (Blue Sea)*

Martha Labarge, *President of the Association du Lac-des-Iles pour l'environnement (Blue Sea)*

Dick Ryan, *President of the Association du bassin versant du lac Blue Sea (Blue Sea)*

Robert Duval, *President of the Association du lac Profond (Blue Sea)*

André Patry, *Acting President of the Association du lac Roddick et du Grand Lac Rond (Bouchette)*

Marc Racine, *President of the Association pour la protection de l'environnement du Lac Cameron (Bouchette)*

Joanne Berniquez, *President of the Association des villégiateurs et résidents du lac Cayamant (Cayamant)*

Nancy Landry, *President of the Association des riverains du Lac Bois-Franc (Déléage)* Richard Lamothe, *President of the Association du Lac Sam (Denholm)*

Alex Long, *President of the Association du lac Cardinal (Denholm)*

Don Hewson, *President of the Association du Lac St-Charles (Denholm)*

Duncan Campbell, *Président of the Association pour la protection du lac St-Germain (Denholm)*

François Labelle, *President of the Association des propriétaires du lac Rond (Denholm)*

Julie Cousineau, *President of the Association pour la protection du lac des Trente-et-Un Milles (Gracefield)*

Phil Holoubek, *President of the Gatineau Fish and Game Club (Gracefield)*

Scott Lawrence, *President of the Association du lac Paquin (Gracefield)*

Stephen Markey, *President of the Association des lacs de Kazabazua (Kazabazua)*

Chuck Gaudreau, *President of the Association pour la protection du lac Heney (Lac Sainte-Marie)*

John Stephenson, *President of the Amis du Lac Pémichangan (Lac Sainte-Marie)*

Carla Monette, *President of the Association des propriétaires du lac Poisson Blanc (Lac Ste-Marie)*

David Hallman, *President of the Association du lac Sinclair (Low)*

Scott Duncan, *President of the Association des propriétaires et résidents du lac Bernard (Low)*

Guy Desjardins, *President of the Association pour la protection des lacs des Cèdres (Messines)*

c. c. : Michel Merleau, Préfet de la MRC de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau

Robert Bussière, Maire de La Pêche et Préfet de la MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais

Lyz Beaulieu, Mairesse de Notre-Dame-de-Pontmain

Marc Grégoire, Président du Regroupement pour la protection de l'eau de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau

Giorgio Vecco, Directeur, ABV des 7