



Reference: 249108

July 23, 2019

**VIA EMAIL: [mdrouin@cord.bc.ca](mailto:mdrouin@cord.bc.ca); [gail.given@cord.bc.ca](mailto:gail.given@cord.bc.ca)**

Gail Given, Chair  
Regional District of Central Okanagan  
1450 K.L.O. Road  
Kelowna, British Columbia  
V1W 3Z4

Dear Gail Given:

Thank you for your letter of June 4, 2019, to Minister Donaldson, regarding the Regional District Board's support for the continuation of the Okanagan Basin Water Board's (OBWB) invasive milfoil program. I have been asked to respond.

Authorization for milfoil control in the Okanagan was provided to the OBWB in April 2019. Both control practices utilized by the OBWB (harvesting and rototilling) have been permitted. The only restriction in the authorization is the use of rototilling in areas where there are known live Rocky Mountain ridged mussels (RMRM); however, harvesting is an acceptable practice in those specific areas.

The RMRM is a species listed as special concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. It is currently under review at the federal level for designation as endangered. This status requires adequate protection of the habitat in order to maintain viable, self-sustaining RMRM populations throughout the current distribution and range of this species. The province, along with the ministry, recognizes the threat that invasive milfoil poses to the recreation and tourism values within the Okanagan Basin. However, these impacts have to be weighed against the need to adequately protect native ecosystems and the species that inhabit them. Staff will continue to work with the OBWB and other partners to discover and implement improved milfoil management practices that also support healthy RMRM populations.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your concerns.

Gail Given, Chair

Sincerely,



Gerry MacDougall  
Regional Executive Director

pc:     The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian  
          Coast Guard  
          Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource  
          Operations and Rural Development