



# Oceana Canada Letter to Prime Minister Carney - Urgent Action to List Batch 2 Stocks Under the Fisheries Act



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February 10, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

**RE: Urgent Action to List Batch 2 Stocks Under the *Fisheries Act***

Dear Prime Minister Carney,

As your government faces a challenging world in 2026, we ask that you pay attention to an important, but thankfully easy to address, issue closer to home — one that can have an outsized long-term effect on the health and wellbeing of our oceans and the communities that rely upon them.

We urge your government to complete the next critical step in implementing the 2019 amendments to the *Fisheries Act* by approving the regulations to prescribe a second batch (Batch 2) of at least 65 major stocks to the Fish Stocks provisions. The proposed regulations were posted to Canada Gazette Part 1 well over a year ago, and have been subject to extensive consultations, but to our knowledge the draft regulations have not been sent by the Minister of Fisheries to Treasury Board for approval and publication. Without timely action, Canada risks falling short of the intent of the amended *Fisheries Act* and undermining coastal economies, ecosystem resilience, and public trust.

Since 2019, Canada has made commendable strides under the modernized *Fisheries Act*, with the first batch of 30 stocks prescribed in regulations and 12 new legally mandated rebuilding plans published in 2025. These plans represent meaningful progress but they also underscore the importance of sustained momentum. Consultation on Batch 2 was initiated October 19, 2022, and was published in Canada Gazette Part 1 on October 12, 2024. We understand that the regulatory package has been waiting for Ministerial sign off since June 2025. Approving Batch 2 — at least 65 stocks — would trigger science-based rebuilding plans for many remaining critical stocks, prevent further decline, and support the recovery of fisheries that underpin jobs, food security, and long-term economic stability.

**There's no reason for further delay**

- **Three years since consultation:** The Batch 2 list was developed through the Canada Gazette consultation process<sup>1</sup> and was found to be largely supported among provincial

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/about-notre-sujet/engagement/2022/fish-stock-provisions-dispositions-stocks-poissons-eng.html>

governments, First Nations and Indigenous groups, fish harvester organizations, and environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs).<sup>2</sup>

- **Public support:** Canadians are calling on Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to list more stocks and rebuild fish stocks – 1,371 petition signers in 2025 and 16,563 since 2021.<sup>3</sup>
- **Federal mandate and resourcing:** The federal government has invested more than \$107 million since 2019 and committed an additional \$33.5 million from 2025–2030 to implement the Fish Stocks provisions and expand the number of prescribed stocks.<sup>4,5</sup> These investments underscore that DFO is well-resourced and accountable for meeting its legal obligations under Sections 6.1–6.3 of the *Fisheries Act*.
- **Global leadership and trade security:** Rebuilding fisheries is a strategic lever for Canada’s economic resilience and international credibility. Healthy fish stocks support access to sustainability-driven markets in the European Union, United States, and Asia-Pacific, reduce trade risk, strengthen food security, and position Canada as a trusted supplier of low-carbon protein aligned with global commitments, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- **The economic cost of inaction:** Each year without prescribed rebuilding defers hundreds of millions of dollars in long-term economic benefits and prolongs risk for coastal communities. For example, rebuilding Southwest Nova Scotia/Bay of Fundy herring earlier could have delivered a net present value of \$402 million by 2032<sup>6</sup> – benefits now pushed to at least 2036 due to listing delays.

Fisheries are the backbone of coastal economies, cultures, and food security, yet too many remain depleted and lack safeguards. Oceana Canada’s latest *Fishery Audit* shows that 16.5% of stocks are critically depleted, a third of which are covered by new rebuilding plans, 15.5% are in the cautious zone, 33.5% are classified as “uncertain,” and only 34.5% are healthy.<sup>7</sup> Without timely intervention, the risks to communities and ecosystems will continue to grow while opportunities to rebuild abundance slip away.

Other jurisdictions demonstrate what is possible with strong rebuilding mandates. The United States has rebuilt 50 depleted stocks under its legislation, increasing revenues by an average of 50%. In the European Union, reforms introduced in 2013 have driven a 37% increase in biomass and reduced overfishing by 40%.

### **Immediate action: List Batch 2 stocks**

Finalizing regulations to add 65 stocks under the Fish Stocks provisions will:

- Trigger science-based rebuilding plans to prevent collapse and restore abundance for priority stocks.
- Provide clear long-term management direction, reducing annual conflict, and increasing stability for the fishing sector.
- Demonstrate Canada’s leadership and commitment to healthy oceans, resilient coastal economies, and credible delivery on legislated mandates.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2024/2024-10-12/html/reg1-eng.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://act.oceana.org/page/157586/action/1>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ae-ve/audits-verifications/22-23/doc/6B313-eng.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/DP-PM/2025-26/index-eng.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://oceansnorth.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Overlooked-and-Undervalued-Rebuilding-Forage-Fish.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://oceana.ca/en/fishery-audit-2025/>

When fisheries are abundant, coastal communities thrive. Jobs grow across supply chains — from small-boat fishers and seafood processors to restaurants and exporters. Listing Batch 2 stocks is a practical, achievable, and science-based step toward a future of abundance, resilience, and shared prosperity. We look forward to recognizing this milestone as Canada advances the rebuilding of its fish stocks and secures long-term prosperity for the fishing industry.

Sincerely,



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**CC:**

- The Honourable Joanne Thompson, P.C., M.P., Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
- Miled Hill, Policy Advisor, Transport, Infrastructure, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Michael Sabia, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet