



May 5, 2023

Honourable Joyce Murray
Minister
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E6

Minister Joyce Murray,

You will be aware that the elver is a species under pressure, and that consequently the extremely important elver fishery requires great care in management by you and your Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canada.

You ordered this fishery closed in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick April 15, and prohibited anyone fishing for eels that are less than 10 cm in length. However, dozens of poachers have been harvesting elvers before and since the closure, observed and documented by witnesses and reported on by media, and this activity is escalating daily this week. Unfortunately, it appears this activity is unattended by DFO personnel. This is despite calls to DFO, by licenced fishers, local witnesses and even a Member of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick.

Closing this fishery but failing to assign resources to ensure compliance and consequence poachers is a recipe for disaster. It risks the imminent devastation of this resource, increases tension and materially increases the risk of violence in fishing communities.

I am advised by officials that New Brunswick's Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS) heard late Wednesday afternoon from DFO officers, finally looking for assistance and support in organizing and executing an enforcement operation. JPS officers stand ready to assist and support, the provincial police force understand the importance of its being ready to assist should it be required.

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Please intervene in this matter and impress upon your department the importance and urgency of acting within hours, not days, to address this matter.

Looking forward to confirmation of an immediate and effective response.



Margaret Johnson
Minister

- c. Blaine M. Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick
Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and
Communities
Honourable Mike Holland, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development
Honourable Kris Austin, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General