

**MAY 3 1 2012**

Professor Jules M. Blais
President
Society of Canadian Limnologists
University of Ottawa
jules.blais@uottawa.ca

Dear Professor Blais:

Thank you for your letter of March 5, 2012, advising of the Society of Canadian Limnologists' concerns about changes to the Environment Canada and Parks Canada workforce and the potential effect of those actions on environmental science.

Environment Canada is a science-based department that provides the scientific information needed to support informed decisions about the environment. More than two-thirds of the Department's budget and more than half of our workforce are dedicated to science and technology. Our scientists and researchers include Nobel Prize winners, members of the Order of Canada and fellows of the Royal Society of Canada. I am proud to say that my department employs some of the best and brightest minds in the field of environmental science. We have employees carrying out research and analysis in a variety of fields, such as air quality, water pollution, climate change, wildlife, and the effects of chemical substances on the environment.

That being said, like all federal departments, Environment Canada has been required to implement a business plan to deliver on its priorities in the context of government-wide fiscal restraint. As a consequence, we have reviewed the Department's spending to ensure we are allocating our resources on Government priorities like improving air quality and cleaner water for Canadians. Although some positions in the Department have been affected, to the extent possible, we will be able to handle this workforce adjustment process through attrition.

In fulfilling its contribution to the Government's fiscal restraint measures, all Parks Canada Agency programming will be reviewed and treated equitably. The Agency will continue to invest in new park establishment and action-on-the-ground projects to maintain and restore the ecological integrity of the national parks. Furthermore, the Agency will help recover species at risk and their habitat that are found within Parks Canada lands and waters.

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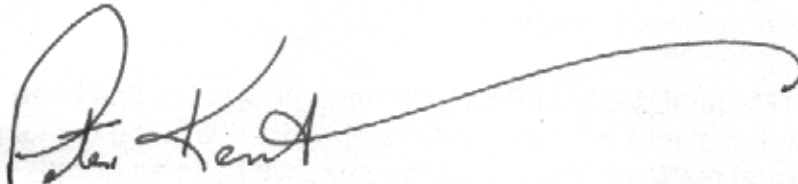
Over the past three years, Parks Canada has spent an average of \$160 million annually on Heritage Resource Conservation, including funds received under Canada's Economic Action Plan. Accomplishments like the establishment of the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site have resulted in the contiguous protection from land to sea of this ecologically rich and diverse place. The Agency will continue to invest significant funds each year, on behalf of Canadians, for conservation-related activities.

Building on work to date, our government has committed significant investments toward strategic environmental priorities, including climate change, chemicals and federal contaminated sites, meteorological services and the Great Lakes.

The environment portfolio is one of the most challenging and exciting in the federal government. As Minister, I am committed to ensuring that my department is in a position to focus on the environmental challenges facing our country. Environment Canada will continue taking action in support of a clean, safe and sustainable environment while carrying out its operations in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner. For further information on the Government's actions to protect the environment, please visit www.ec.gc.ca.

I appreciate your bringing the Society of Canadian Limnologists' views to my attention, and extend my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Kent". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

The Honourable Peter Kent, P.C., M.P.