

Central Okanagan | posted January 14, 2016 by Kelsey Davis

## Government Urged to Do More in the Fight Against Invasive Mussels

Work has begun to prevent a harmful species from getting into Okanagan waters.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board is asking the federal government to take action in order to prevent zebra and quagga mussels from entering the water of the Central Okanagan.

According to a letter from the Okanagan Basin that was addressed to four federal ministers, if the mussels get into Okanagan waters, it could impact water intake, outfall, boat and docks in the lake, and in lake infrastructure.



Photo Credit: Okanagan WaterWise / Facebook  
Invasive mussels could cause big problems for Okanagan Waters.

“Of special concern in B.C. is the threat to hydroelectric facilities, agricultural production, tourism and maintaining pacific salmon species,” reads the letter. “It is estimated that an invasion of zebra and quagga mussels in the Pacific Northwest could cost \$5 billion per year.”

The federal government brought in legislation to prevent the spreading of the mussels in June of 2015. The Okanagan Basin is now asking for more decisive action to be taken, including training border patrol officers to inspect and stop mussel infested watercraft from entering Canada.

The letter was addressed to Minister of Public and Safety and Emergency Preparedness Minister, Ralph Goodale, Minister of Transport Marc Garneau, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, and Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and Canadian Coast Guard, Hunter Tootoo.