

GLOBAL NEWS

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# Westward expansion of invasive mussels creeps closer to the Okanagan



By Blaine Gaffney

Reporter Global News

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board is renewing its call for the federal and provincial governments to increase efforts to keep invasive zebra and quagga mussels from getting into BC waterways.

This after the invasive bivalves were recently discovered in Montana.

OBWB chairperson and West Kelowna mayor, Doug Findlater, has written the prime

minister urging a stronger defence system.

“There are still gaps in our defence, with inconsistent enforcement at our borders, and inspection hours that are not long enough. This, and more, needs to be fixed now, before next year’s boating season,” said Findlater in a news release.

“Infested watercraft have been intercepted on their way to the Okanagan. This, coupled with the fact that we have calcium-rich waters, known to put us at higher-risk for infection, means more needs to be done,” added Findlater.

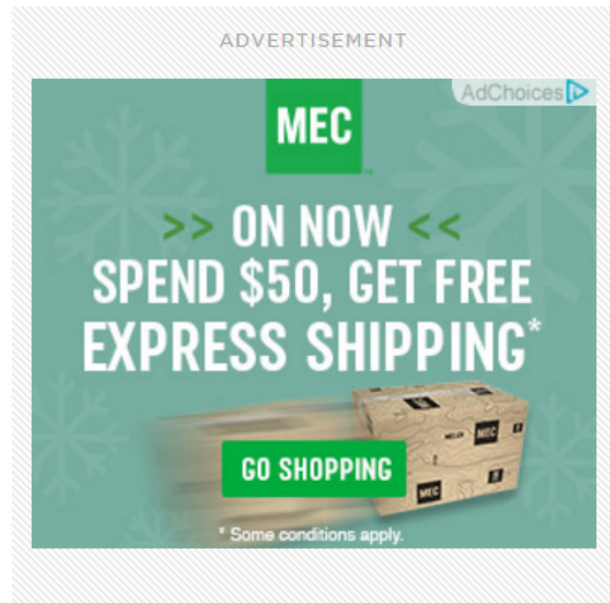
**READ MORE: [Permanent mussel inspection stations being set up in BC](#)**

The water board wants increased training and funding for the Canadian Border Services Agency and more research and education for prevention, containment and eradication methods.

It also wants the province to expand the operating hours at BC inspection stations and to commit ongoing, core funding to the mussel defence program.

A 2013 study by the OBWB estimated the cost of zebra or quagga mussels infesting Okanagan waters would be \$43 million annually in ecological damage and to maintain aquatic infrastructure.

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