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*Improving Access and Habitat
for Migratory Rainbow Trout.*

Hon. Marc Garneau, PC, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Hon. Bernadette Jordan, PC, MP
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of the more than 300 members of the Ontario Steelheaders, I am writing to raise an issue of great importance to our economy and membership, and to request your intervention and help to resolve the matter.

Since the early 1980s, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's (GLFC) Canadian portfolio has been under the purview of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). This interface into government allows DFO to act as the fiduciary for the GLFC's Canadian government funding allocation from government. Prior to the 1980s, the GLFC had been supported by External Affairs Canada (now GAC) in a structure that mirrored Canada's handling of other international commissions - such as the International Joint Commission - and the GLFC's US governance structure where the portfolio is supported by the Department of State. For several reasons, having DFO function as the fiduciary has proven to be less effective than the GLFC's original Canadian support structure and, in the context, a change is clearly needed.

As but one example of the functional impact of the above, despite having committed to a 31/69 percent Canada/US GLFC funding formula, Canada has embarrassingly failed to pay its share for the past 20-years. In real terms, this means that Canada is paying only part of the sea lamprey control budget in Canadian waters and is contributing nothing at all to the GLFC's science and

fishery management mandate items. Fortunately, in the short term, the US has paid the balance of Canada's promised portion, but this binational charity comes at a price. Members of Congress have repeatedly underscored that this arrangement is both frustrating and unsustainable. It is reasonable to assume that our US partners will be re-evaluating this arrangement in the year ahead which only heightens the urgency of having Canada right this historical funding shortfall.

As I am sure you know, the Great Lakes are massive natural assets that contain almost 20% of the world's surface fresh water. They are the source of drinking water for millions of Canadians and they are a unique ecosystem that supports thousands of plants, fish, animals, and the second largest freshwater fishery on the planet. As a result, the Canadian economy reaps hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in direct economic activity; the annual economic value of the fishery alone is more than \$8 billion. Sea lamprey are a clear and present danger to the Great Lakes and the GLFC is the only body controlling their populations on a Basin-wide basis. Canada's ongoing failure to fully support the GLFC places all of this in jeopardy. In this context, it is shocking and deeply troubling that Canada has, for so long, shirked its responsibilities as a full Great Lakes partner.

Founded four decades ago, the Ontario Steelheaders, a not-for-profit organization, has worked to:

- Improve access and habitat for migratory rainbow trout;
- Provide young rainbow trout with suitable nursery habitat;
- Provide relevant and appropriate input to government, agencies, and other organizations consistent with our mandate; and
- Educate members and the public on relevant issues, conservation practises and proper angling techniques.

In this context, we are writing to ask that the Government of Canada come to the table as a fully and committed partner. Canada must undertake the steps necessary to reverse its long-standing practice of relegating the GLFC and the Great Lakes to the policy/priority back-burner. Canada must stand tall as an equal partner on the Great Lakes and provide appropriate support for the GLFC, including full funding and good governance support by naming GAC as the GLFC fiduciary moving forward.

Thank you in advance for your time. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Karl Redin, President
Ontario Steelheaders Inc.

Cc: Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, President of the Queen's Privy
Council
Forestry Hon. John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and
Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Alex Ruff, MP, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound
Ben Lobb, MP, Huron-Bruce