

## **Protect the Coast**

### **A New Coastal Strategy and Law for British Columbia**

British Columbia needs a coastal strategy and law to leverage and coordinate the work of provincial ministries, First Nations, local communities, and stakeholder groups.

#### **Why do we need a B.C. Coastal Strategy and Law?**

##### *To assert jurisdiction and leverage engagement from other orders of government*

B.C. exercises considerable jurisdiction in the marine and coastal realm, and works closely with other levels of government who share this jurisdiction. Yet unlike all the Atlantic provinces, B.C. has no comprehensive coastal and marine strategy. A B.C. coastal strategy will clearly articulate provincial jurisdiction and enable the province to better engage with other governments and communities.

##### *To better advance and integrate provincial policy objectives*

A coherent B.C. coastal strategy will enable provincial agencies to find opportunities for greater integration and increase the impact of diverse programs on environmental protection, coastal infrastructure, training and capacity-building, economic development, and technology and innovation.

##### *To advance reconciliation*

A B.C. Coastal strategy will support reconciliation with coastal First Nations by recognizing First Nations' rights and title and upholding the province's commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

##### *To signal to the world the importance of B.C.'s ocean and coastlines*

A B.C. Coastal strategy will provide a vision and objectives to guide actions in the increasingly crowded coastal zone and highlight the importance the government places on these vital areas. In addition to protecting B.C.'s coast, sensitive marine ecosystems, and vulnerable species, a strategy will also protect our coastal communities and economies.

##### *To provide a comprehensive legal response to a broad suite of cross-cutting issues*

B.C. does not have a comprehensive coastal protection law. No marine counterpart to the B.C. *Land Act* exists, and piecemeal legislation and policy govern numerous coastal marine activities.

##### *To establish a home for coastal issues within the government*

The province of B.C. used to have a provincial Ministry of Fisheries, which became a division, then a branch. Now coastal and marine responsibilities are scattered throughout various Ministries. A law could establish a new governance body such as a B.C. Coastal Management Council or Authority.

<sup>1</sup> G.S. Gislason and Associates. 2007. Economic Contribution of the Oceans Sector in British Columbia. (numbers updated to 2018 dollars)

*To keep wild places wild*

A new law will preserve coastal and ocean health, and halt coastal habitat loss. It will accelerate the completion of a network of marine protected areas to benefit fisheries, biodiversity and the economy. A law can better regulate clean water: it can set marine environmental quality objectives from upland activities. It will help communities adopt ecosystem-based approaches to manage risks from flooding due to extreme weather events, sea level rise, climate change, and ocean acidification.

*To implement enforceable coastal and marine zone plans, similar to land use plans*

The notable plans from the Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (MaPP) developed collaboratively with First Nations contain zoning and management directions for a wide range of marine uses and activities under provincial jurisdiction like monitoring and enforcement, pollution, and tenured activities. A new law can provide a clear pathway for legislative implementation of these plans.

*To enhance food security by ensuring local access to marine food resources.*

A new law will support the implementation of the Wild Salmon Strategy as well as a comprehensive approach to sustainable aquaculture.

***A new B.C. Coastal Strategy and Law will ensure that the government of B.C. has the right tools in place to protect the coast and keep our ocean healthy for the future.***

**Why have we reached out to you?**

The idea of a coastal strategy and law has been contemplated at various times in B.C. since the elimination of the B.C. Ministry of Fisheries. With the government's numerous commitments to coastal communities, the time is right to provide a legislative framework to support their implementation. We hope that you see the value that this initiative can contribute to your own coastal and ocean work.

We hope that you are interested to learn more about this campaign, available to provide feedback and able to join our growing wave of allies as we continue to advocate for a B.C. Coastal Strategy and Law. If you are interested in learning more about this campaign and how you can support our initiative please contact:

Kate MacMillan,  
CPAWS Provincial Ocean and Coastal Coordinator, 778-886-0870, [kmacmillan@cpaws.org](mailto:kmacmillan@cpaws.org)

Michael Bissonnette,  
WCEL Marine Program Staff Lawyer, 604-684-7378 x 233, [mbissonnette@wcel.org](mailto:mbissonnette@wcel.org)