



The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister
Environment and Climate Change Canada
200 Sacre- Coeur Boulevard
Gatineau, QC
K1A 0H3

June 5, 2019

Re: Timing of funding program announcements

Dear Honourable Minister,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance (PEIWA), the umbrella organization for the 24 non-profit community watershed management groups on PEI. Collectively, our groups manage 95% of the province and work with local communities and stakeholders to complete environmental projects on a watershed scale. Types of projects completed include: working with industries on development and implementation of Beneficial Management Practices; rehabilitating ecosystems (stream, riparian, estuarine, forest, wetland and upland habitats); monitoring ecosystem health; completing stewardship activities; and educating the public on environmental issues.

To complete these activities, we rely on federal funding programs such as those provided through Environment and Climate Change Canada including EcoAction, Atlantic Ecosystem Initiatives, Habitat Stewardship Program, and Canada Nature Fund. The timing of program announcements and funding decisions are a serious concern to us, as funding delays create undue stress and hardship for our groups. For example, receiving word about funding in the middle of summer causes the following problems:

- Worthwhile environmental projects are not completed as there is not enough time for project implementation. Successful projects require significant planning to leverage the funds, support and resources to complete the on-the-ground-work in the necessary timing windows.
- Less employees and employment weeks. Not knowing about funding until late in the employment season, means seasonal employees are left in a precarious situation.
- Loss of public support and momentum as waiting on funding announcement can cause changes to project time-lines.
- Volunteer and employee burnout as these individuals must implement contingency plans and re-negotiate contracts and partnerships to account for project delays.



I am encouraged to hear that successful recipients have been notified regarding EcoAction awards within the last week and appreciate the hard work that your department has made in ensuring this turnaround. I would like to reiterate the need that funding decisions for all programs are announced quickly and request that funding and announcement timelines should be standardized in upcoming years.

I look forward to increased communication with your department regarding watershed management and funding programs available to watershed groups. I am always willing to discuss, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Mike Durant". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mike Durant , Chairperson



AUG 29 2019

Mr. Mike Durant
Chairperson
Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance
P.O. Box 701
Souris PE C0A 2B0

Dear Mr. Durant:

Thank you for your letter of June 5, 2019, concerning the timing of Environment and Climate Change Canada's program announcements and funding decisions. I regret the delay in responding.

As you know, Environment and Climate Change Canada has a number of funding programs, as part of its mandate, that provide financial support for environmental projects and for participation in environmental assessments. The Government of Canada encourages the efforts of organizations such as the watershed management groups on Prince Edward Island to address global pressing environmental challenges (whether in air, water or on land), and deliver real benefits for the environment and the economy. I am pleased to learn about the actions that watershed management groups on Prince Edward Island, in partnership with local communities and stakeholders, have undertaken to complete environmental projects on a watershed scale.

Environment and Climate Change Canada is committed to delivering quality service through the delivery of its funding programs. All of these programs abide by service standards with respect to acknowledging applications, communicating funding decisions, responding to funding inquiries, and administering the contribution agreements for the funding programs. Each year, the Department carefully reviews all grant and contribution projects to ensure they meet federal government priorities, including air quality, climate change, clean water and biodiversity. This review can sometimes delay funding decisions. In addition, different programs have different timelines.

I am pleased to announce that the Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance received a funding offer of \$144 582 for its project "Improving water quality in an agricultural landscape on PEI" under the Atlantic Ecosystem Initiatives Funding Program. I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that all funding decisions under the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk were communicated to successful and unsuccessful applicants throughout the month of May 2019 and Environment and Climate Change Canada officials are busy working with partners to implement approved projects.



In Budget 2018, a historic \$1.3 billion was invested in nature conservation to support Canada's international commitments on biodiversity, sustainable development and climate change. This investment included the establishment of the Canada Nature Fund to help partners create new protected areas and protect species at risk. Provinces, territories, Indigenous Peoples, and private and not-for-profit sectors are eligible to apply for funding to protect and conserve areas of biodiversity across the country, including through the Pathway to Canada Target 1 Challenge. The latter initiative will provide up to \$175 million to partners to create new protected and conserved areas such as Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, as well as provincial and municipal parks. A call for proposals closed on March 29, 2019, and funding decisions will be made this summer.

I appreciate being made aware of the Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance's views, and I wish it continued success in all its future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C McKenna', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.