

Honourable Kathryn McGarry,
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Suite 6630, 6th Floor, Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3

February 24th, 2017

Re: Timeline for issuing the American Eel Government Response Statement

We are writing regarding your response, dated September 13th, 2016, to the letter sent by the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Ottawa Riverkeeper, Ontario Rivers Alliance and Ontario Nature on August 22nd, 2016 expressing concern over the delay by the Province of Ontario in producing a government response statement (GRS) following publication of the Recovery Strategy for American Eel. In your response, you indicated that a draft would be ready for public consultation this winter.

Since then, MNR's Species at Risk Recovery team has worked diligently to consult with stakeholders and develop the draft. We understand that MNRF intends on meeting with appropriate Aboriginal Communities and organizations to continue consultation. We appreciate their willingness to meet with representatives from the Canadian Wildlife Federation and Ottawa Riverkeeper on several occasions, to be transparent about their process, and to listen to concerns and recommendations for the GRS. Last week, they hosted a multi-stakeholder workshop at which relevant scientific data, management programs, and aboriginal traditional knowledge were reviewed.

At the end of the workshop, MNRF's intended next steps were conveyed and it was indicated that the draft may not be released until the spring. We appreciate that the MNRF's intent is to resolve conflicts where possible prior to posting the draft GRS. We are concerned about further delays in issuing the draft and ultimately finalizing the GRS. American Eel are in a deeply precarious state in Ontario, and rapid action is required to prevent the potential loss of the species from the province.

We understand that once the Species at Risk Recovery Team finalizes the draft GRS, the next step is to obtain approval for posting. Is the Minister committed to working with the Species at Risk Recovery team to ensure that the draft GRS is approved for posting before the end of April, 2017?

Signed,



Nicolas W. R. Lapointe, Senior Conservation Biologist – Freshwater Ecology



Canadian Wildlife Federation



Meaghan Murphy, Staff Scientist
Ottawa Riverkeeper



Linda Heron, Chair
Ontario Rivers Alliance



Anne Bell, Director of Conservation and Education
Ontario Nature

