Dear Members of the FOPO **Standing Committee on
Fisheries and Oceans:**

 We are contacting you because of your position on the FOPO Standing Committee for Fisheries and Oceans and the Committee’s concern about the sustainable management of Canada’s fishery resources. In 2019, your Committee issued a report titled The Striped Bass in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and Miramichi Rivers: Striking a Delicate Balance.

In that report, Recommendation #2 was: “That Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s restoration framework prioritize the long-term balance of fish species in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence and Miramichi River.”

In the Introduction for that report, it was stated: “However, the rapid population increase of striped bass has also raised concerns of ecosystem imbalances and further strains on struggling wild Atlantic salmon (Salmo Salar) populations.” Further in the Introduction for that report, it stated: “The Committee heard from all witnesses that a balance must be struck between a healthy striped bass population and ensuring that other species, in particular wild Atlantic salmon, are protected from excessive predation.”

Many in the Miramichi Valley communities were encouraged by your Committee’s efforts requiring DFO to take action and to utilize the Precautionary Approach in managing the river ecosystem rather than simply species by species individually.

Unfortunately, DFO has seen fit to ignore the recommendations outlined in the report. Now, 5 years later, the Miramichi River system population of Atlantic salmon has reached an all-time recorded low. While the striped bass population is at an all-time high. The Atlantic salmon is on the brink of extirpation in the river system. We are facing a crises in salmon stocks, salmon management and in the culture and economics of the Miramichi River Valley

 We are asking that you, as a member of this important Standing Committee, impress upon the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard that DFO needs to take immediate action to reverse this critical situation and if necessary summons the Minister and officials of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to return to the the House of Commons Fisheries Committee immediately to report on the status and intended action to address this looming crises. DFO needs to reduce the striped bass population to the 100,000-spawner level discussed in the report. DFO also needs to financially support the enhancement and stocking of Atlantic salmon to turn around this disastrous decline.

Your Committee’s 2019 recommendations should no longer be ignored by DFO. We thank you for your efforts with and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,