



House of Commons

13 January 2014

The Honourable Gail Shea
Minister of Fisheries & Oceans
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Shea,

We are writing to you today to share our concerns regarding the closure of seven world famous DFO libraries, and to seek clarification on the manner in which some of these libraries were closed and how their books and research material were disseminated.

Recent media reports have indicated that valuable and irreplaceable research was permanently destroyed, including thrown in the dumpster. These allegations of effective “book burning” are very troubling to Canadians.

In addition you recently stated that most copyrighted material was digitized – but this does not explain what happened to the grey research, or unpublished research held in these libraries and often used by scientists to further their own projects as a historical reference and baseline data.

Our oceans are facing significant changes including warming and acidification and many of our fisheries are at risk of overexploitation if we are not careful. Our management practices need to be based on sound science and our scientists need access to rich historical data to help us understand these changes. That is why we find it preposterous that scientific research would be released or destroyed in any manner.

We are asking for a detailed account for the way in which the material of these libraries were disseminated – specifically why wasn’t a process in place to secure a new home for all research material prior to the closure of the libraries at either universities or other public institutes? As well, what exact percentage of the materials at the seven libraries in question were released or discarded?



We thank you for your prompt response.



Robert Chisholm
MP, Dartmouth – Cole Harbour
NDP Critic for Fisheries & Oceans



Kennedy Stewart
MP, Burnaby - Douglas
NDP Critic for Science & Technology