



Submission on Draft Strategic Management Plan for Private Moorage

Southern Gulf Islands and Southeast Vancouver Island | Draft of 2 September, 2026

To: Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Government of British Columbia

From: Save Our Docks and Security Association (SODSA.ORG)

Date: 2 October 2026 | For the public engagement closing 18 October 2026

Request and position

SODSA comprises owners of lawfully authorized private docks who have complied with the rules and invested substantially in safe access to their waterfront homes in the Southern Gulf Islands. We ask the Province to withdraw the mandatory, fixed-date retrofit requirements for existing authorized docks, directly notify affected owners, disclose all evidence and costs behind its proposed standards, and issue a revised draft seeking meaningful comment to all private dock owners in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness. Existing authorized structures should remain lawful under their existing approvals and grandfathered subject to maintenance, pollution prevention, demonstrated site-specific new harm, applicable preexisting laws and conditions of tenure.

It should be noted that SODSA members obtained authorizations and invested in their docks under the requirements applicable when they were approved. This includes consultation with First Nations at the time. Records on file may contain habitat assessments, mitigation conditions and referrals. Before imposing a uniform “one size fits all” retrofit, the Province should review the actual approval history of each affected dock, identify what ecological issues if any, were assessed and explain what new site-specific evidence or changed conditions justify additional work. While the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship handles the core Crown land tenure, getting approval for a coastal private dock has typically required coordinating with multiple agencies in a rigorous process such as:

- Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship: Manages Crown land foreshore tenures, leases, and the *Water Sustainability Act*. Its Archaeology Branch also administers the *Heritage Conservation Act* for coastal sites.
- Transport Canada: Requires a navigation assessment or application under the Canadian Navigable Waters Act to ensure the dock does not block public navigation.]
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO): Reviews projects if there are potential concerns regarding fish habitat or risks of harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction (HADD).
- Local Government (Municipal/Regional District/Islands Trust): Local zoning bylaws, setback requirements, and foreshore development permits often apply.

Eel grass environmental protection is considered in all current and most legacy approval guidelines so that issue was taken into account for our foreshore lease approvals including the float and gangway construction. So what changed? The SMP does not provide an explanation of what, if anything, has changed. We submit it owes a duty to private dock owners to so provide.

We support protecting eelgrass, fish habitat and the rights and interests of First Nations. A policy can pursue those objectives and still distinguish new works from existing lawful structures, test measures against local habitat, and give affected people a fair opportunity to be heard. The present draft has elements of such an approach. For example, Zone 1 and Zone 2 rules do not apply to existing authorized docks or replacement authorizations, and the draft expressly says that it does not require removal or relocation solely because an authorization is active or expired [1, pp. 9–10, 16–17]. Our objection is directed primarily to the retrofits that do apply to existing authorized structures and to the record and process offered in support of them. We submit, based on the facts and “evidence” stated in the SMP, the draft policy statement is arbitrary and capricious. Our submission is bolstered by recent competing research that has come to light (i.e. Wagstaff, 2026).

1 What the draft would actually change

The draft applies only to private moorage on provincial marine Crown land in the study area. It excludes, among others, industrial docks, marinas, commercial docks, community docks, and strata or group moorage [1, p. 7]. Existing authorized private docks would have to meet BMP D-01, requiring at least 43% light passage through gangway, pier and float decking by 2036; BMP D-06, addressing susceptible polystyrene flotation by 2036, or sooner if deteriorating or spalling; and BMP D-08, limiting above-deck lighting, by 2031. Other standards apply on component replacement, repair or maintenance [1, pp. 27, 34–35, 37, 40]. These are material obligations even though the draft does not itself order blanket removal. Again, 43% light passage, dock dimensions etc. are arbitrary and capricious requirements sought to be imposed upon a target group of private dock owners only.

We do not suggest that the excluded structures are unregulated. They may be subject to other laws, tenure conditions and policies. Our concern is that an ecological strategy which describes cumulative shoreline pressures does not compare the impacts or regulatory treatment of all comparable structures in the study area. The Province should explain why private residential docks alone bear these particular retrofit obligations and whether similar sources of shade, contamination or seabed disturbance are controlled by measures that produce equivalent environmental outcomes.

Moreover, the singling out and targeting of private docks only is inconsistent with an analogistic regulatory example—B.C. Building Code. Building codes when updated grandfather in pre-existing buildings and does not exclude compliance requirements for commercial, community or public structures. Why does this SMP seek to do so? No explanation is provided. The rationale needs to be explained. The Crown tenure records allow an initial comparison of authorized moorage categories **[See Attachments A and B]**. But tenure boundaries do not measure the physical footprint or docks. The Province should publish an independently verifiable inventory of actual dock footprints, habitat overlap and ecological effects across private, commercial and community/public facilities before relying on a comparison between categories. This is an important request given the facts contained in Attachment A.

2 Evidence must fit the obligation imposed

Light and eelgrass

The underlying ecological concern is legitimate. The draft cites research that light availability matters to eelgrass and other aquatic plants and recognizes that floating and overwater structures can shade sensitive habitat [1, pp. 18–19, 26–27]. Published studies of eelgrass near docks find substantial adverse effects in some settings [4]. SODSA does not dispute that shading can potentially cause harm. The question is whether a uniform retrofit of every existing authorized gangway, pier and float to a minimum 43% light-passage product will improve ecological outcomes at sites without light-sensitive habitat, and by how much at sites where habitat is present.

The draft itself explains that benefit varies with deck width, height, orientation and open area; grating alone may not restore ambient light or maintain eelgrass and fish behaviour; and light-penetrating decking is most useful in shallow locations containing light-sensitive aquatic plants [1, pp. 26–27]. The published scientific sources should therefore be tied to the policy choice: what is the empirical basis for 43% rather than another standard; is this the manufactured material's nominal open area, light measured below a whole dock, or a biological performance threshold; and what net benefit is expected at representative existing sites after construction disturbance is included? The draft does not set out that validation in BMP D-01 [1, p. 27]. We ask for the underlying analysis, including uncertainties and alternatives, before a universal deadline is adopted. Same issue applies to dock dimensions, etc.

Wagstaff 2026 and its proper limits

Wagstaff's 2026 peer-reviewed experiments examines macroalgae and sessile invertebrates on sunlit vertical panels alongside floating docks in a sheltered Boston Harbor marina [2]. In longer experiments, the presence of macroalgae changed community composition without reducing total invertebrate cover or diversity; native taxa tended to be more abundant with algae present. The results varied with species, life stage and timescale. That study is relevant to evaluating the biological effects of interventions on established dock communities and reinforces the draft's own statement that ecological benefit depends on setting and design [1, p. 27; 2].

Wagstaff did not measure British Columbia eelgrass, test dock-deck grating, or establish that existing docks are harmless. It does not refute the eelgrass studies cited in the draft and supplies no numerical alternative to 43%. Its limited but important lesson is that physical or community change should not automatically be treated as a measured adverse outcome, and that a prescribed measure should be assessed for its intended and unintended effects at the site in question. The attached comparison workbook **[Attachment C]** identifies where Wagstaff supports, qualifies, or does not directly address the SMP; SODSA relies on that distinction rather than claiming that one study disproves the plan [3].

Cumulative effects and comparable sources

Section 6 correctly notes that cumulative effects arise from the combined effects of shoreline modifications, vessel use and land-based activities, not from private docks alone [1, pp. 21–23]. It also rejects a single dock-density threshold because ecological responses differ between locations [1, p. 22]. SODSA asks the Province to apply the same analytical care to prescribed retrofits. Publish a study-area baseline and a source-by-source comparison of private, commercial, group and government-related structures and other pressures, with comparable metrics for footprint, shade, eelgrass overlap, flotation leakage, boat traffic, and disturbance. Identify which data are measured, modelled

or unavailable. Explain why the proposed rule concentrates on one class if the identified objective is an ecological outcome across the whole foreshore.

3 Existing lawful docks require a fair transition

A dock owner who obtained authorization, paid to construct to the then-applicable specifications and maintains the structure reasonably expects the Province to take those lawful investments seriously. A Crown-land tenure is not identical to ownership of the foreshore, nor does compliance freeze environmental standards forever. The appropriate comparison with building-code transitions is a policy principle: existing lawful structures ordinarily receive a measured transition, with upgrades triggered by significant new work or a demonstrated safety or environmental problem. It is not an assertion that the building code legally governs marine docks or guarantees a perpetual exemption.

The draft partly accepts this principle by exempting existing authorized docks from zoning and applying several BMPs when components are replaced [1, pp. 10, 16, 29–33]. It departs from it by imposing calendar deadlines for decking, flotation and lighting regardless of component condition, remaining useful life, actual habitat, engineering constraints or cost. SODSA requests a continuing status for lawful existing structures, coupled with compliance when material components reach the end of their safe service life; earlier remediation where a qualified assessment identifies material harm, active foam shedding or a serious safety concern; and an alternative-compliance route where a different method provides an equal or better outcome.

In particular, deteriorating or spalling polystyrene can release pollution and merits prompt action on evidence of its condition [1, pp. 33–35]. Sound encapsulated or otherwise contained flotation should not be presumed to create the same urgency as foam that is shedding. The Province should specify inspection criteria, practical repair options and an appeal path, and assess the safety risks of dismantling a functioning dock or undertaking work in exposed waters on an individual dock basis. Where a dock is needed for emergency access or where road access does not exist, those facts must have express weight [1, p. 5].

4 Notice and procedural fairness

According to SODSA's members, the Province did not notify them of this request for consultation despite having on file each person's contact information as authorization holders. Rather we learned of the request for consultation indirectly by certain Islands Trustees. SODSA asks the Province to confirm how many current and expired authorization holders were identifiable, whether any direct notices were sent, when and how those notices were delivered, and what steps were taken to reach owners with limited internet access. The draft describes an Advisory Group that included representatives of waterfront and dock owners and a public online survey, but does not identify who these representatives are, explain how existing permit holders were contacted individually, or provide a complete account of the group's conclusion; it still contains a date placeholder [1, p. 8].

Representation on an advisory group does not establish that every affected authorization holder received actual notice. Nor does the SMP disclose details of First Nations consultations. This is something that ought to be publicly disclosed. **Please publish for our review and comment the advisory group's membership and mandate, a summary of the evidence and submissions considered, and an account of how concerns raised by First Nations and dock owners informed the draft, while respecting confidential information. SODSA will make a separate access-to-information request for specified records where necessary.**

As of this submission, the Province's public engagement is open through 18 October 2026 [5]. A public website and survey permit some participation, but the proposed retrofits directly affect a known and identifiable set of authorization holders. Direct notice of the draft, the full maps, the applicable compliance dates and an accessible way to submit technical materials would give those holders a meaningful opportunity to respond. This was not done. The maps and public materials should be complete: the draft still shows a placeholder for the promised interactive map [1, p. 16]. Consultation with First Nations is an additional and distinct obligation; SODSA does not propose that owner engagement replace it.

The legal content of procedural fairness depends on the type of decision and governing law. General policy development does not necessarily entail an individual hearing or create an automatic right to personal notice. In later individual decisions affecting a tenure, the consequences to the owner and statutory context may require more specific opportunities to respond; the Supreme Court of Canada describes procedural fairness as contextual [6]. SODSA therefore asks the Province both to improve this policy consultation as a matter of sound administration and to commit to fair, reasoned, individual processes if it later seeks to impose or enforce materially burdensome conditions on an authorization. SODSA reserves its members' legal positions; this submission does not assume that failure to mail notice alone invalidates the draft policy.

5 Equal treatment, reasons and public confidence

The Province can address private moorage in a dedicated policy. That choice is not, by itself, proof of improper political motive, unconstitutional discrimination, or a breach of democratic rights. It does, however, call for an explanation when the plan invokes science and cumulative impact yet excludes other overwater structures from its scope [1, pp. 7, 21–23]. Without a comparative account and a credible transition for lawful docks, the chosen burden risks appearing selective, arbitrary and disproportionate. That appearance is heightened when affected permit holders report finding the process by accident.

SODSA's concern is that the draft currently asks owners to accept a far-reaching intervention before it shows the local evidence, expected ecological gain, owner cost, safety implications and comparative treatment of other causes of habitat pressure. Transparent reasons and direct engagement are basic expectations of accountable government in a free and democratic society. SODSA does not ask the Province to disregard First Nations' rights or ecological protection; both deserve a plan that can demonstrate its choices.

More critically, given SMP's unqualified representation that it is "evidence" and scientifically based, we stress-tested this proposition by comparing the SMP along with its studies and references relied upon to (1.) Who arranged and/or funded each study, (2.) who authored each study, (3.) what, if any political interference was involved and (4.) what, if any, other studies exist in the public domain that refute or qualify same. [See Attachments D and E]. The results give pause for concern, particularly in light of Wagstaff, 2026 [See again Attachment C].

Six Requested changes before finalization

1. Suspend adoption of fixed-date retrofits for existing authorized docks and issue a revised draft after owner notification and publication of the technical record. Maintain enforceable responses to

documented pollution, unsafe conditions and site-specific harm under applicable law and tenure terms.

2. Send direct, individualized notice to all identifiable current and former authorization holders, with a plain-language explanation of the proposed duties, maps and deadlines. Allow at least 60 days after effective delivery for comments and provide a route for full written and expert submissions alongside the survey.
3. Publish the derivation and field validation of the 43% threshold, its measurement method, expected habitat outcomes, alternative thresholds and methods, representative retrofit costs, safety assessment, and construction disturbance assessment. Identify where available studies actually concern British Columbia eelgrass as opposed to different species or regions.
4. Publish a comparative cumulative-effects inventory of private, commercial, group, institutional and government docks and other pressures. Explain the other applicable controls and why the proposed obligations fall only on private residential docks in this SMP.
5. Create an existing-authorized-dock transition rule: no mandatory calendar retrofit of sound components without a reasoned, site-specific finding; new-work triggers at the end of useful life; qualified habitat assessments where a retrofit is proposed; and alternative compliance or exemption for minimal expected benefit, engineering impracticability, unsafe access, disproportionate disturbance or critical access needs.
6. Provide written reasons for decisions affecting existing tenures, an opportunity to respond to the site evidence, an independent review or reconsideration mechanism, and a public monitoring plan measuring actual ecological outcomes. Publish a response-to-comments report before the final plan takes effect.
7. Provide any other SODSA requests contained in the body of this submission.

Conclusion

The draft recognizes a genuine environmental issue but does not yet establish that identical retrofits of all existing authorized private docks are necessary, effective or proportionate. Its narrow scope, missing comparative account and reported absence of direct notice to known permit holders undermine confidence in the consultation. SODSA asks the Province to revise the plan around measured local outcomes, fair treatment of lawful existing structures, direct engagement with those affected and an express explanation of its evidence and choices. Adopting the present retrofit requirements without those steps would, in SODSA's view, be an unduly selective and insufficiently justified exercise of public authority.

Respectfully submitted,

Save Our Docks and Security Association (SODSA)

Sources and supporting materials

[1] Province of British Columbia, Draft Strategic Management Plan for Private Moorage in the Southern Gulf Islands and Southeast Vancouver Island (2 September 2026), pp. 5–10, 16–17, 21–23, 26–27, 33–35, 37. Supplied PDF; official copy: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/natural-resource-use/land-water-use/crown-land/crown-land-uses/regional->

initiatives/southern-gulf-islands-and-southeast-vancouver-island/strategic_management_plan_for_private_moorage_in_the_southern_gulf_islands_and_southeast_vancouver_island.pdf

[2] M. Wagstaff, “The role of macroalgae in structuring a New England fouling community: implications for non-native species on floating docks,” *Biological Invasions* 28, article 108 (2026), DOI 10.1007/s10530-026-03810-w. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10530-026-03810-w>

[3] SMP Wagstaff 2026 Page by Page Comparison, supplied workbook; Comparative Scientific Analysis, supplied PDF. Analytical aids, not independent peer-reviewed research.

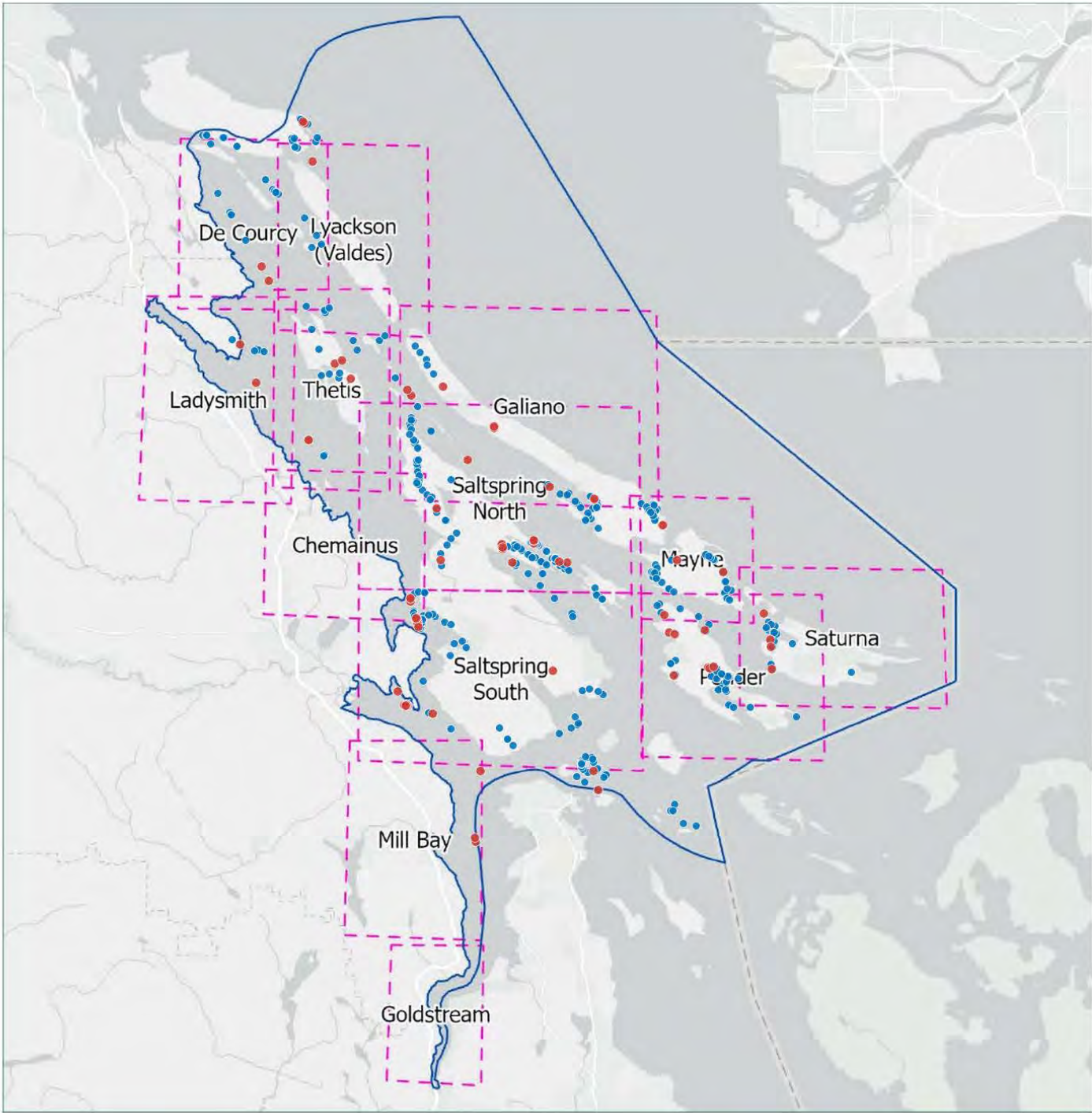
[4] J. Eriander et al., “The effects of small-scale coastal development on the eelgrass (*Zostera marina* L.) distribution along the Swedish west coast,” *Ocean & Coastal Management* 148 (2017), 182–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2017.08.001>. Cited by draft SMP; geographical limits apply.

[5] Government of British Columbia, “Private Moorage in the Southern Gulf Islands and Southeast Vancouver Island,” public engagement page (survey 3 September–18 October 2026). <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/engagement/private-moorage/>

[6] *Baker v. Canada* (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration), [1999] 2 SCR 817, 1999 CanLII 699 (SCC), especially paras. 21–28 (contextual procedural fairness). <https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/1999/1999canlii699/1999canlii699.html>

Southern Gulf Islands and southeast Vancouver Island

Current Crown tenure parcels by moorage category | Map from the draft SMP, Appendix A

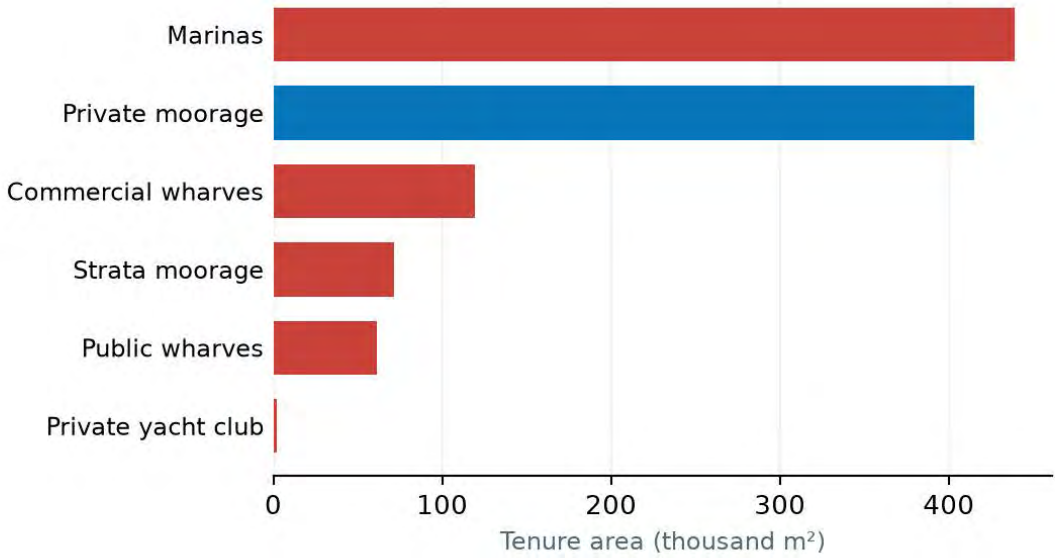


Authorized tenure area

Private moorage
415,360 m² · 429 parcels

All other mapped moorage
693,722 m² · 74 parcels

Other-to-private area ratio: 1.67 : 1



● Private moorage ● Public, commercial, marina, strata and yacht-club moorage

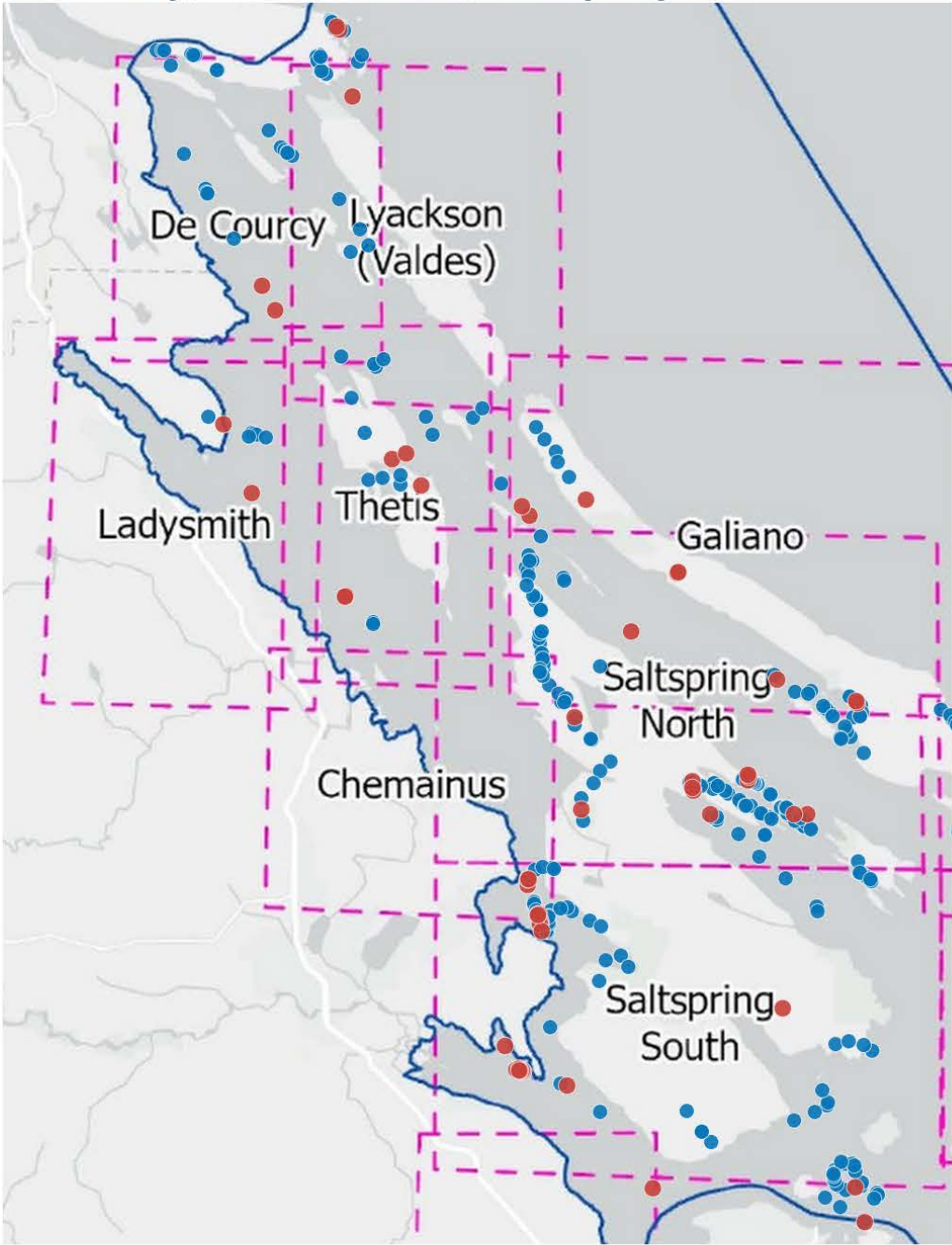
These polygons show authorized Crown-land tenure area, not the physical surface of docks.

Study boundary digitized approximately from SMP Appendix A p. 50. Point placement and edge counts are provisional; see methods on page 3.

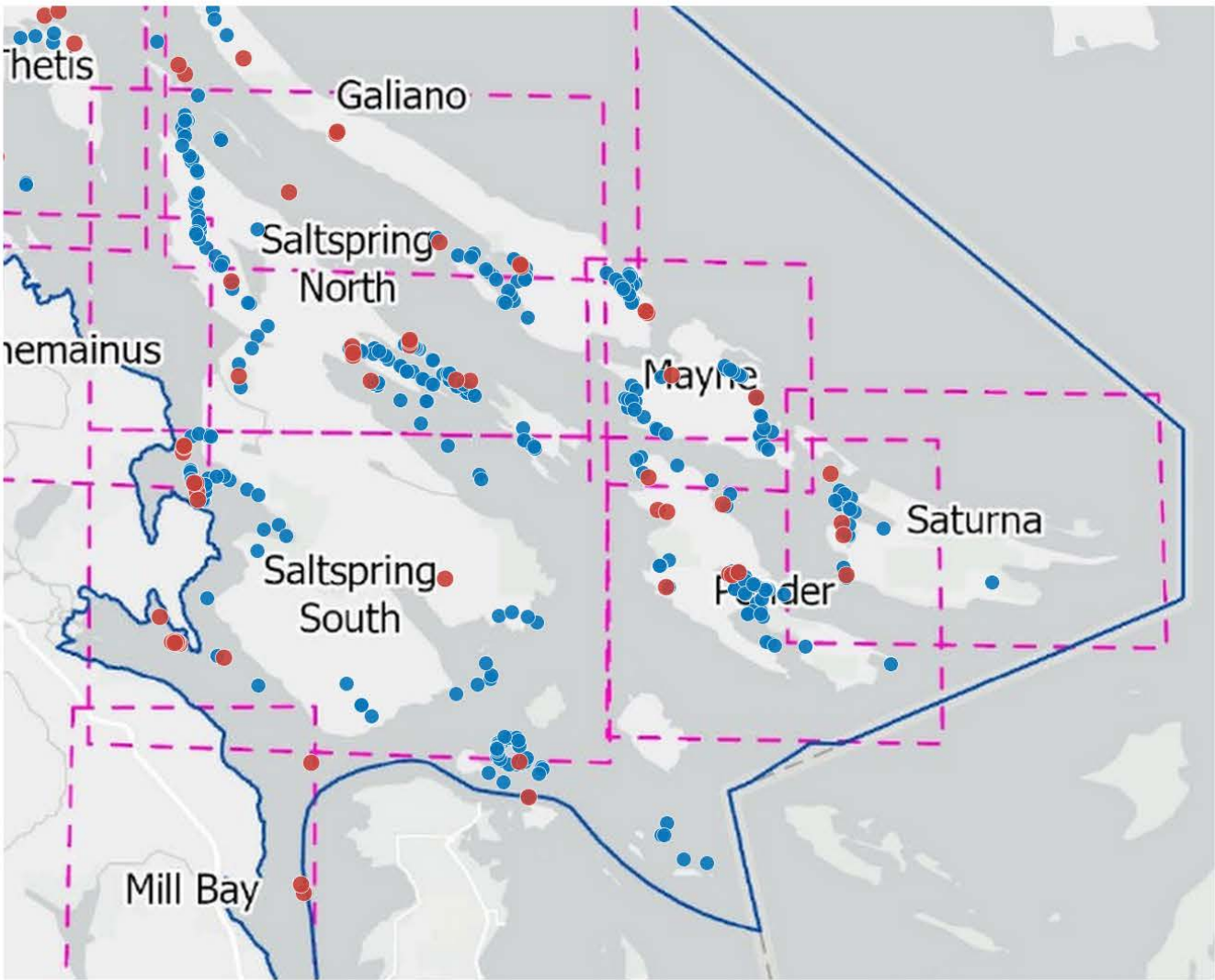
Where the tenures are concentrated

Two detailed views | Blue: private moorage Red: other mapped moorage

North • De Courcy, Thetis, Galiano, Salt Spring



South • Pender, Mayne, Saturna, Mill Bay



Dots mark tenure polygon centroids. A dot may fall on shore or inland even where the associated authorization extends over water.

Map backdrop and blue study boundary: Province of British Columbia, draft Strategic Management Plan for Private Moorage, Appendix A, p. 50.

Tenure data: BC Geographic Warehouse, TANTALIS Crown Tenures export dated 27 September 2026.

SMP Page	Issue	SMP Statement / Proposition	Wagstaff (2026) Evidence	Relationship	Strength	Suggested Submission Wording	SMP Citation	Wagstaff Citation
15	Ecological values / adverse effects	The SMP states that private moorage can affect ecological values through shading, seabed disturbance, changes in hydrodynamics, contaminants, and cumulative loss or degradation of habitat, and says these findings support evidence-based BMPs to mitigate ecological impacts.	Wagstaff found that ecological effects associated with floating docks were not uniformly negative. Macroalgae altered community composition rather than consistently reducing invertebrate abundance or diversity in longer-term experiments, algae were associated with greater relative abundance of native taxa.	Material qualification	High	The SMP appropriately recognizes that private moorage can alter ecological conditions. However, recent experimental evidence demonstrates that ecological alteration is not synonymous with ecological degradation. Wagstaff (2026) found that dock-associated macroalgae altered community composition without consistently reducing abundance or diversity and, in longer-term experiments, were associated with increased relative abundance of native taxa. Accordingly, the ecological consequences of existing moorage should be assessed by reference to actual biological outcomes rather than presumed adverse effect.	Draft SMP p. 15	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 12-15
18	New moorage and cumulative ecological impacts	The SMP states that new private moorage can contribute to ecological impacts and cumulative effects on the marine and foreshore environment and uses that proposition to justify consideration of alternative moorage options.	Controlled floating dock experiments show that dock-associated communities can respond in complex ways, including significantly higher native-taxon abundance when macroalgae are present.	Material qualification	Medium-High	The proposition that new infrastructure may have ecological effects is unobjectionable. The relevant question is whether those effects are adverse. Wagstaff (2026) demonstrates that communities associated with floating docks can respond in ecologically complex ways, including significantly greater abundance of native taxa where macroalgae are present. The SMP should therefore distinguish ecological change from demonstrated ecological harm.	Draft SMP p. 18	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 9-11
19	Sensitive aquatic plant habitat / shading	The SMP states that overwater structures can alter light, wave energy and substrate conditions, shading can reduce eelgrass coverage, and construction can cause habitat loss, turbidity and sediment resuspension.	Wagstaff accepts that reduced light can constrain primary producers and discusses increasing light beneath docks as a way to support macroalgal persistence.	Supported in principle	High	Wagstaff (2026) does not undermine the general proposition that shading can affect aquatic vegetation. It recognizes reduced light as a constraint on macroalgae. The study therefore supports managing light where light-sensitive habitat is actually present, but it does not establish that every existing dock causes a material adverse effect requiring identical mitigation.	Draft SMP p. 19	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 14-15
19	Eelgrass absence beneath docks / setbacks	The SMP states that eelgrass may be absent directly beneath floating private moorage and that coverage can increase with distance from structures; it uses this and related literature to support setbacks and no-overlap requirements for sensitive aquatic plant habitats.	Wagstaff studied macroalgae and fouling communities, not eelgrass. It does not rebut eelgrass-specific evidence.	No direct conflict	Low as rebuttal	Wagstaff (2026) should not be relied upon to contest the SMP's eelgrass-specific evidence. Its significance is instead that the biological consequences of dock-associated shading and vegetation changes are more complex than a simple linear assumption of ecological harm.	Draft SMP p. 19	Wagstaff 2026, scope of study
26	BMP D-01 - light penetration rationale	The SMP states that sunlight is critical to submerged aquatic plant survival, including eelgrass and macroalgae, and that shading from private moorage can reduce vegetation and alter macroalgal communities.	Wagstaff similarly recognizes light limitation beneath overwater structures and proposes light-permeable materials and orientation as possible ways to enhance macroalgal growth.	Supported in principle	High	The general scientific premise underlying BMP D-01 - that light availability affects aquatic vegetation - is supported by Wagstaff (2026). The issue is not the validity of that premise, but whether it justifies a uniform numerical retrofit standard for every existing authorized dock regardless of site conditions.	Draft SMP p. 26	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 14-15
27	Effectiveness and limits of grating	The SMP calls light-penetrating decking an effective mitigation measure but acknowledges that grating does not fully replicate ambient light and may not by itself maintain eelgrass growth or natural fish behaviour. It also states that ecological benefit depends on design variables such as open area, width, height and orientation.	Wagstaff likewise finds ecological responses to be context-dependent and expressly cautions that management interventions should be evaluated in local environmental contexts rather than assumed to produce consistent outcomes across marinas or regions.	Strong support for site-specific treatment	Very High	The SMP itself acknowledges that the efficacy of light-transmitting decking varies according to dock configuration and ecological setting. Wagstaff (2026) reinforces this point by expressly cautioning that management interventions should be evaluated within local environmental contexts rather than assumed to produce consistent outcomes across marinas or regions. This weighs against a universal retrofit requirement where no site-specific ecological benefit has been demonstrated.	Draft SMP p. 27	Wagstaff 2026, p. 15
27	Mandatory 43% light-transmission standard	BMP D-01 requires gangway, pier and float decking to allow at least 43% of light to penetrate, including existing authorized private moorages by 2036.	Wagstaff provides no evidence for a 43% threshold, no universal numerical threshold, and no basis for assuming the same intervention will produce consistent ecological benefits at different sites. The study was conducted at one sheltered Boston Harbor marina on sunlit vertical dock surfaces.	Major evidentiary gap / policy tension	Very High	Nothing in Wagstaff (2026) supports a universal 43% light-transmission threshold. To the contrary, the study demonstrates context-dependent biological responses and cautions against assuming consistent outcomes across locations. A mandatory 43% retrofit of every existing authorized dock should therefore require direct scientific justification showing that the numerical threshold is necessary, effective and proportionate across the range of habitats to which it will apply.	Draft SMP p. 27	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 3, 15
28	Shading as the primary impact pathway	The SMP states that shading is the primary pathway through which private moorages affect nearshore ecosystems.	Wagstaff demonstrates that community outcomes are also strongly shaped by biological interactions, facilitation, competition, habitat structure, life stage and timescale.	Material qualification	High	The characterization of shading as the primary ecological pathway is incomplete when applied to fouling communities. Wagstaff (2026) demonstrates that biological interactions - including facilitation, competition and habitat structure - can themselves determine community composition and native/non-native dominance. These mechanisms should be incorporated into any assessment of the ecological consequences of existing dock structures.	Draft SMP p. 28	Wagstaff 2026, p. 13
28	Dock size, shade and ecological function	The SMP states that reducing moorage size reduces the spatial area and duration of shading, helping maintain primary productivity and habitat availability.	Wagstaff supports the proposition that light influences algae, but shows that resulting community-level effects are not necessarily predictable from light alone.	Partly supported; materially qualified	Medium-High	Reducing shade may increase light availability, but Wagstaff (2026) demonstrates that the ultimate biological outcome depends upon how macroalgae interact with the resident community. Increased light is therefore an ecological input, not in itself proof of a beneficial ecological outcome.	Draft SMP p. 28	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 12-15
32-33	Piles and artificial structures	The SMP states that piles can reduce light, disturb sediments and alter habitat, and directs owners to minimize pile number and diameter, including in combination with measures to increase light penetration.	Wagstaff confirms that artificial structures affect habitat, but also shows that their surfaces can support ecologically important macroalgal/invertebrate interactions and alter native/non-native dominance.	Material qualification	Medium	The ecological function of artificial structures is not exclusively negative. Wagstaff (2026) demonstrates that artificial dock substrates also support biologically significant interactions that may favour native species. Alteration or replacement of existing structural components should therefore consider both the impacts being reduced and the habitat/community functions potentially being altered.	Draft SMP pp. 32-33	Wagstaff 2026, p. 14
74	Eelgrass impact rating - High	The SMP rates private-moorage impact on eelgrass as High, primarily because of long-term shading, scour, fragmentation and nursery-habitat loss.	Wagstaff does not study eelgrass and should not be used as rebuttal evidence to the eelgrass-specific rating.	No direct conflict	Low as rebuttal	Wagstaff (2026) does not provide a basis for disputing eelgrass-specific impacts. It does, however, demonstrate why findings regarding one ecological component should not automatically be extrapolated to all dock-associated biological communities.	Draft SMP p. 74	Wagstaff 2026, scope of study
74	Kelp impact rating - Moderate	The SMP rates private-moorage impact on kelp as Moderate, citing long-term shading, physical damage from boats and mooring lines, and localized canopy loss that increases with moorage density.	Wagstaff found macroalgae to be an important structuring component of dock communities. Native taxa were more abundant in algae-present treatments, while algae removal favoured non-native colonial ascidians.	Material qualification	High	The SMP appropriately identifies possible physical impacts on kelp, but Wagstaff (2026) demonstrates that macroalgae associated with dock environments can also perform positive ecological functions, including altering competitive relationships in favour of native taxa. Evaluation of impact should therefore consider biological function and community response, not simply vegetation presence, absence or physical alteration.	Draft SMP p. 74	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 11-14
74	Herring / spawning vegetation	The SMP describes loss of spawning vegetation, including eelgrass and kelp, through shading as a high-impact pathway for herring.	Wagstaff provides no evidence concerning Pacific herring.	No direct conflict	Low as rebuttal	Wagstaff (2026) should not be presented as contradicting the SMP's herring-specific conclusions. Any challenge to this proposition should rest on herring-specific evidence.	Draft SMP p. 74	Wagstaff 2026, scope of study
76	Sea urchins / indirect effects from algae loss	The SMP states that sea urchins may experience indirect cumulative effects from loss of kelp and understorey algae due to shading.	Wagstaff reinforces the proposition that macroalgae are an important habitat-forming and community-structuring component of artificial and modified marine habitats.	Generally supportive	Medium	This aspect of the SMP is broadly consistent with Wagstaff's recognition of macroalgae as an important habitat-forming and community-structuring component.	Draft SMP p. 76	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 13-14
76	Oysters and mussels - Moderate impact	The SMP rates impacts on oysters and mussels as Moderate, principally through sediment disturbance, displacement, water-quality impacts and contaminants.	Wagstaff found native molluscs among the taxa benefiting from algae-present treatments; native taxa were significantly more abundant where algae were present.	Useful qualification	Medium-High	The SMP's assessment of oysters and mussels focuses primarily on pathways of adverse impact. Wagstaff (2026), however, demonstrates that dock-associated macroalgal communities may also favour native sessile molluscs. This is further evidence that existing dock ecosystems should be evaluated as functioning communities rather than solely as sources of disturbance.	Draft SMP p. 76	Wagstaff 2026, pp. 9-11

Comparative Scientific Analysis

Draft SMP for Private Moorage vs. Wagstaff (2026)

Central conclusion	Wagstaff supports the importance of light to aquatic vegetation, but materially qualifies a one-size-fits-all assumption that dock-associated ecological change is necessarily harmful. The paper is most useful in challenging the evidentiary basis for a universal 43% retrofit requirement.
Strongest SMP page	Page 27 - BMP D-01. The SMP acknowledges design- and context-dependent benefit from light-transmitting decking, yet imposes a universal 43% threshold on existing authorized docks by 2036.
Key quantitative result	Assembly experiment: native species cover 66% with algae present vs. 40% with algae removed ($p=0.027$). Non-native cover was 53% vs. 54%, not significant.
Second key result	Displacement experiment: native species were 50-67% cover in algae-present treatments vs. 36% with algae removal; algae removal favoured non-native colonial ascidians.
Important limitation	Wagstaff was conducted at one sheltered Boston Harbor marina on sunlit vertical dock surfaces. It does not rebut eelgrass-specific British Columbia evidence and should not be over-generalized.
Recommended policy principle	For existing authorized docks, prefer site-specific, outcome-based mitigation supported by a qualified professional over universal retrofit rules where site-specific ecological benefit has not been demonstrated.

Measure	Algae Present	Algae Removed	Interpretation
Assembly - native species cover	66%	40%	Significantly higher native abundance with algae present (p=0.027).
Assembly - non-native species cover	53%	54%	Difference not significant (p=0.699).
Displacement - native species cover	50-67%	36%	Native species significantly more abundant in algae-present treatments.
Settlers experiment	Higher settlement and diversity	Lowest settlement / diversity	Algae appeared to facilitate early settlement rather than inhibit it.
Long-term total invertebrate cover/diversity	No consistent reduction	No corresponding improvement	Macroalgae mainly changed community composition rather than total abundance/diversity.

Sources Used in the SMP (Sorted by Page Number)

Page # (SMP)	Date of research (or publication)	Author(s)	Reference relied upon	Apparent funding/source	Political / policy influence	Assessment
A. Legislation and direct government policy sources						
21	2016	Province of B.C.	B.C. Cumulative Effects Framework Interim Policy	Province of B.C.	Direct government policy	Policy framework, not independent research.
22	2023	Province of B.C.	WLRs Cumulative Effects Framework	Province of B.C.	Direct government policy	Province citing its own framework.
23	2026	Province of B.C.	WLRs Cumulative Effects Analysis Guidance	Province of B.C. (CLA Branch)	Direct government policy/science interface	Government methodology for decision-making.
24	2024a	Province of B.C.	WLRs Archaeology Review	Province of B.C.	Direct government policy	Regulatory/administrative source.
24	2024b	Province of B.C.	WLRs Private Moorage Policy	Province of B.C.	Direct government policy	Government relying on its own policy.
24	2024c	Province of B.C.	WLRs Coastal Marine Strategy	Province of B.C.	Direct government strategic policy	Establishes provincial marine-policy objectives.
24	2024d	Province of B.C.	WLRs General Permission for Private Moorage	Province of B.C.	Direct government policy	Regulatory framework.
26	2018	B.C. government + shishalh Nation	B.C./shishalh Guidance for Qualified Professionals	B.C. government + shishalh Nation	Government-to-government / Indigenous rights	Collaborative management; reconciliation/rights perspective.
28	n/a	Province of B.C.	B.C. Land Act	Province of B.C.	Direct provincial legislation	Key authority for dock tenures. Statutory policy source.
28	2023	Washington Dept. Ecology	Foam Docks law	Washington State	Direct legislation/regulation	Policy precedent.
28	1999	US Army Waterways Experiment Station	Dock design guidance	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers / federal government	Federal agency research	Applied engineering/environmental research.
30	2009	NOAA	Treated Wood Products	U.S. federal government	Federal environmental-management perspective	Government technical source.
31	2014	NOAA/NMFS	Overwater Structure Guidelines	U.S. federal appropriations	Federal fisheries/regulatory perspective	Management guidance, not neutral science.
32	2018	California Regional Water Quality Control Board	California Regional Water Quality Control Board	State of California	Government regulatory source	Environmental regulator; policy orientation.
35	2020	USACE	Washington Permit	U.S. federal appropriations	Direct federal regulatory policy	Permit requirements.
35	2021	USACE	Maryland Permit	U.S. federal appropriations	Direct federal regulatory policy	Government management source.
37	2016	Oregon Dept. Fish & Wildlife	Dock Guidelines	Oregon state government	State fisheries-management perspective	Regulatory/policy source.
37	2026	Transport Canada	Killer-whale measures	Government of Canada	Direct federal policy	Regulatory/policy source.
37	2025	Transport Canada	Minor Works Order	Government of Canada	Direct federal regulatory policy	Legal/navigation standard.
38	2025	DFO	DFO Code of Practice	Government of Canada	Direct federal regulatory guidance	Designed to influence dock practices.
39	n/a	DFO	DFO Timing Windows	Government of Canada	Direct federal regulatory guidance	Fisheries-protection rule/guidance.
40	2011	Washington Dept. Ecology	Dock guidance	State taxes, environmental accounts, federal grants	Government environmental-policy perspective	Funding includes multiple sources.
42	2020	Washington DNR	Decking study	Washington State	Government resource-management perspective	State and federal appropriations.
45	n/a	Government of Canada	Canadian Hazardous Products Regulations	Government of Canada / parliamentary appropriation	Direct government policy	Regulation, not independent science.
45	n/a	Government of Canada	Fisheries Act	Government of Canada	Direct federal legislation	Statutory policy source.
45	n/a	Province of B.C.	B.C. Heritage Conservation Act	Province of B.C.	Direct provincial legislation	Statutory policy source.
46	2014	Province of B.C.	B.C. Archaeological Chance Find Procedure	Province of B.C.	Direct government policy	Administrative/regulatory guidance.
47	2025	Alaska Dept. Fish & Game	Best Practices for Docks and Ramps	Alaska state appropriations, Fish & Game funds	Government regulatory/management perspective	State agency; not independent.
47	2019	Metz / California Coastal Commission	Water quality program	California Coastal Commission	Government environmental-regulatory	Commission report.
48	2023 (draft)	B.C. & shishalh Nation	shishalh swing Dock Management Plan	B.C. government + shishalh Nation	High governance influence	Provincial/First Nation governance precedent.
48	2024	B.C. government + shishalh Nation	shishalh Factsheet	B.C. government + shishalh Nation	High governance influence	Explanatory policy document.
49	2024	Washington Dept. Ecology	Foam Docks law	Washington State	Direct legislation/regulation	Policy precedent (cited again).
B. Scientific and academic references						
14	2025	Carson et al.	Construction noise / Pacific sand lance	Mitacs + ECSC (with Uvic & WCS Canada)	Moderate public/conservation funding	Peer-reviewed; federal environmental funding disclosed.
15	2025	Cristiani et al.	Seagrass connectivity	NSERC + DFO + INKREST/Port of Sept-Îles + DFO SPERA	Moderate government/public-sector influence	Government and public-port funding disclosed.
15	2014	Gladstone & Courtenay	Marine ecology	Australian university	Low	Peer-reviewed research.
16	2018	O'Regan et al.	Pender Harbour docks	M.C. Wright & Associates for B.C. FLNRD	High government commissioning	Consultant study commissioned by province.
18	2022	Logan et al.	Residential docks / BMP review	Academic/scientific authors	Low-moderate	Peer-reviewed review; management recommendations.
18	2017	Erlander et al.	Eelgrass / coastal development	Swedish research institutions	Low	Peer-reviewed research.
18	2023	Martin et al.	Environmentally friendly moorings	CSIRO	Moderate government influence	Australian national science agency.
20	2023	Lambert et al.	Small overwater structures	Washington Dept. Fish & Wildlife	Moderate government connection	Peer-reviewed; evidence mixed/inconclusive.
22	2024	Murray et al.	Cumulative impact trapping	DFO / Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat	High government science-policy connection	Official DFO research document.
26	2002	Blanton et al.	Light under ferry terminals	PNM; for Washington State Dept. of Transportation	Moderate government commissioning	Scientific work for state transport purpose.
26	2014	Davies et al.	Marine light pollution	University-based; UK NERC (related programme)	Low direct political influence	Academic research.
26	2006	Fresh et al.	Light-permeable grating	Washington/Puget Sound institutions	Low-moderate	Experimental research; regulatory applicability.
27	2004	Sanger et al.	Dock shading	U.S. government-supported research	Moderate government connection	Peer-reviewed; U.S. government support.
29	2022	Taylor	Pier shading / salt marsh	University of Southern Mississippi	Low	Academic thesis.
29	2014	Ono & Simenstad	Juvenile salmon / light	University-based	Low	Peer-reviewed experiment.
31	2021	Karla	Docks / marine algae	University of Gothenburg	Low	Academic thesis.
31	2003	Kelly & Blyven	Environmental/aesthetic impacts	NOAA Coastal Ocean Program	Moderate-high government influence	Government decision-support tool.
33	2026	Murphy et al.	Canadian cumulative impacts	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Moderate-high government research connection	Peer-reviewed; many federal scientists.
36	2001	Nightingale & Simenstad	Overwater structures	University of Washington (state habitat process)	Moderate government-policy connection	Government policy process.
36	2006	Nightingale, Longcore & Simenstad	Artificial night lighting / fishes	Academic research	Low	Academic research.
41	2018	Szyplski	Kelp / overwater structures	Central Washington University	Low	Academic graduate research.
C. NGO, indigenous-government, port-authority and other institutional material						
17	2013	Islands Trust	Eelgrass / dock threats	Local government, grants, conservation funds	Conservation/public-policy orientation	Conservation mandate.
26	2026	Clean Marine BC / Georgia Strait Alliance	Clean Marine BC	Donations/grants + government funding (B.C., federal)	Environmental-advocacy orientation	Charitable org; registered to lobby; government funding.
27	2018	shishalh Nation	BMP for marine docks	shishalh Nation government	High rights-holder/governance perspective	First Nation management position.
33	2024	Surfrider Foundation Canada	Foam Free Waters	Donations and grants	High issue-advocacy relevance	Brief to House of Commons (policy advocacy).
37	2024	Vancouver Fraser Port Authority	Dock guideline	Port revenues (federal statutory framework)	Moderate regulatory/commercial-government	Port authority; environmental & commercial roles.
41	2022	Ocean Diagnostics Inc.	Microplastics	Project funding (not specified)	Moderate environmental-advocacy orientation	Encourages use for projects and advocacy.
42	2020	Fauna & Flora International	Polyethylene report	Trusts/foundations; governments, corporations	Conservation-advocacy orientation	Registered conservation charity; substantial public funding.
46	2023	Plymouth Marine Laboratory	Artificial light	UK NERC (£1.466m)	Low political; research orientation	Public research institution.
47	2021	VIPA	Roberts Bank Terminal 2 material	Port authority	Potential project-proponent influence	Related to Port's proposed project.

Sources Used in the SMP: Funding, Conflicts, Policy Alignment and Contrary Evidence

[illegible]

Main sheet row	Reference	Web research source(s) / note
40	Best Practices for Docks and Ramps	https://omb.alaska.gov/html/budget-report/department-table.html?dept=Fish&fy=25&type=Enacted
15	Cumulative Effects Framework Interim Policy	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
59	Guidance for Qualified Professionals: Docks in shisháhl Nation swiya	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857406001480
59	Guidance for Qualified Professionals: Docks in shisháhl Nation swiya	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
16	WLRs Cumulative Effects Framework	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15503391/
16	WLRs Cumulative Effects Framework	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
38	Use of Treated Wood Products in Aquatic Environments	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/driving-and-transportation/transportation-infrastructure/engineering-standards-and-guidelines/environment/references/guidelines-treated_wood.pdf
29	Guidelines for Overwater Structures	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857406001480
29	Guidelines for Overwater Structures	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
44	Docks, Piers and Overwater Structures in Shoreline Master Program Planning	https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/budget-legislative-priorities/how-we-are-funded
30	Comparison of Light Transmitted Through Decking Types	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857406001480
62	Evaluation of Methods to Increase Light Under Ferry Terminals	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
9	The Effects of Boat Docks on Eelgrass Beds in Coastal Waters of Massachusetts	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9852189/
9	The Effects of Boat Docks on Eelgrass Beds in Coastal Waters of Massachusetts	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857406001480
55	Noise Results in Lower Quality of an Important Forage Fish, Pacific Sand Lance	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0025326X25001390
14	Anthropogenic Impacts on Seagrass Habitat Connectivity	https://www.facetsjournal.com/doi/10.1139/facets-2024-0152
50	The Nature, Extent and Ecological Implications of Marine Light Pollution	https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1890/130281
10	Effects of Small-Scale Coastal Development on Eelgrass Along Swedish West Coast	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0964569117302247
31	Using Light-Permeable Grating to Mitigate Impacts of Residential Floats on Eelgrass	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857406001480
23	Effects of Docks on Total Cover and Community Assemblage of Marine Algae	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
32	Environmental and Aesthetic Impacts of Small Docks and Piers	https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/1737
32	Environmental and Aesthetic Impacts of Small Docks and Piers	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
33	Do Small Overwater Structures Impact Marine Habitats and Biota?	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
53	Literature Review of Environmentally Friendly Moorings	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S014113612002061
18	Cumulative Impact Mapping and Vulnerability of Canadian Marine Ecosystems	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
51	Artificial Night Lighting and Fishes	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857414003000
24	Reducing the Effect of Overwater Structures on Migrating Juvenile Salmon: An Experiment with Light	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857414003000
25	Impacts of Docks in Pender Harbour: Phase 2 Assessment	https://sachaoregon.ca/publications
25	Impacts of Docks in Pender Harbour: Phase 2 Assessment	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
26	Cumulative Impacts of Dock Shading on Spartina alterniflora in South Carolina Estuaries	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15503391/
26	Cumulative Impacts of Dock Shading on Spartina alterniflora in South Carolina Estuaries	https://openalex.org/W2022370545
27	Ecological Effects of Overwater Structures on Subtidal Kelp, Northern Puget Sound	https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/etd/1052/
27	Ecological Effects of Overwater Structures on Subtidal Kelp, Northern Puget Sound	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
28	Effects of Pier Shading on Salt Marsh Plants in Mississippi	https://aquila.usm.edu/masters_theses/946/
58	Clean Boating and Marina Eco Certification	https://www.jobbyistsregistrar.bc.ca/app/secure/ori/lrs/do/reports/funding/received?cocid=1552&extnl=true&regid=56581726
46	Breaking Down Ocean Polystyrene	https://www.fauna-flora.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/fauna-flora-annual-report-2023c.pdf
65	Artificial Light at Night Research Brief	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925857414003000
66	Roberts Bank Terminal 2 – Underwater Noise / SRKW Avoidance and Mitigation Measures	https://connectsci.au/pc/article-abstract/doi/10.1071/PC22037/38123/
63	Use of Preservative-Treated Wood and Alternative Materials for Overwater/Waterfront Structures	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/driving-and-transportation/transportation-infrastructure/engineering-standards-and-guidelines/environment/references/guidelines-treated_wood.pdf

Methodology and Cautions

Purpose	Expand the earlier #2 working-format chart with declared conflicts, policy alignment, and contrary/qualifying literature.
Source basis	The reference list in the September 2, 2026 Draft Strategic Management Plan, pages 43–48, plus targeted web verification of publication disclosures, funding and contrary/qualifying studies.
Declared conflicts	Only explicit author/publisher declarations are recorded as “none declared.” If a declaration was not found in accessible material, the cell says so. Institutional commissioning/funding is listed separately and is not treated as proof of bias.
Supports / contradicts	Assesses whether the cited source tends to support, qualify, or contradict the specific type of policy for which the SMP uses it. A government policy document can “support” the SMP as precedent without being independent empirical evidence.
Opposing studies	Direct oppositional studies are uncommon. The table therefore also identifies studies that materially qualify scope, effect size, transferability, or certainty. “None identified in targeted search” does not mean none exists.
Important recurring qualifiers	Lambert et al. (2024) concludes evidence is well documented for seagrass/light effects but inconsistent/inconclusive for macroalgae or fish and insufficient for robust overall conclusions about marine small overwater structures. Fresh et al. (2006) finds grating percentage alone (16–50%) did not significantly predict eelgrass change. Sanger et al. (2004) reports severe under-dock Spartina effects but small proportional marsh effects at broader spatial scales. Tavlör (2022) found reduced light under piers but no clear broader vegetation-community effect.