



Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance

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The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc

Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

Nov.21, 2017

Subject: Your Primary Ministerial Responsibility and Duty to Protect Wild Fish

We, the Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance, are writing to you today to insist that you do not abdicate your primary constitutional responsibility and duty to protect wild fish to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). You must abide by the current Fisheries Act regulations, and finally accept to oversee the testing of farmed salmon for dangerous pathogens like the highly contagious piscine reovirus before they are put into our ocean. In addition, your government should not amend or repeal s. 56(b) or in any way lower the standard required by s. 56(b): that fish to be transferred or released do not have any disease or disease agent that may be harmful to the protection and conservation of wild fish.

Better still, there exists a sustainable way forward. The Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance, church representatives, environmental groups, scientists, academics, ecotourism businesses, sports fisheries, Indigenous people all along the rivers, and people from all backgrounds are in solidarity with the fish farm occupiers. We collectively call on you to collaborate with the fish farm occupiers to remove fish farms from Musgamagw, Namgis and Mamalilikala territories. This would show genuine and meaningful reconciliation with these Indigenous people and would lend credibility to what Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated so fervently in the election: "Indigenous Rights are not just an inconvenience, they are a sacred obligation!" That means removing open net fish farms from Musgamagw, 'Namgis and Mamalilika territories, and supporting the expansion of land-based aquaculture that Namgis First Nation started as a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable way forward.

In the meantime, it is essential that you be seen as a champion of wild salmon by taking the responsible, precautionary approach in favor of wild salmon by immediately proceeding with the testing of farmed salmon before Marine Harvest and Cermaq continue to fill their pens without testing them for the much feared piscine reovirus.

We look forward to your response.

Eddie Gardner, President
Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance