



**Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance**  
#213 – 46993 Yale Road  
Chilliwack, BC  
V2P 7X4

August 6, 2017

Open Letter to:

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Premier John Horgan  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4

**Re: Report on Violations - Illegal By-Catch in Fish Farms and Illegal Occupation of Fish Farms**

It has come to our attention that, on August 2, 2017, Hereditary Chief George Quocksister Jr. of the Awahwoo Tribe of the Laich-Wil-Tach Nation boarded the Marine Harvest Sonora Point salmon farm, located in Nodales Channel in the Discovery Islands. He was concerned there were young wild fish trapped in the farm. This has long been a concern for him, as he has seen herring and salmon fisheries severely decline in his unceded territory.

Chief Quocksister took an underwater Go Pro camera, boarded the farm and submerged the camera with a long pole. Despite being told by fish farm staff that there were no fish in the pen, he filmed thousands of juvenile herring and other species. George reported this to the First Nations fisheries office on this reserve, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and others in authority to see what is going on and release these fish. We are astonished that DFO officials never returned his calls.

These reportable illegal by-catch were trapped in pens where the farmed fish had been harvested and the pen raised to within just half a meter of the surface. These fish normally dive deep during the day, but here they were trapped at the surface in the high temperatures of the B.C.'s **heat wave, circling without** the opportunity to dive into the cooler depths.

Wild herring populations are collapsing along the B.C. coast where salmon farms are operating, such as **in Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw** territory (Broughton Archipelago), where commercial herring fishing has been closed for over thirty years and yet the herring populations continue to plummet. Researchers are documenting heavy sea louse loads on these fish, and they are heavily exposed to the highly contagious piscine reovirus and other farm salmon pathogens.

We urgently ask you to connect with Hereditary Chief George Quocksister Jr. and take immediate action to ensure these wild fish are released and to ensure the wild fish of B.C. are no longer trapped in salmon farms and put so carelessly at risk. We, and Chief Quocksister, also demand reporting from Marine Harvest on how many herring were killed during the Sonora Point harvest, as it is unreasonable to think the thousands of herring left to die in the sun were the only herring in the farm.

We call on you also to meet with the **traditional leaders of the Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw** to honor their Indigenous right to have fish farms evicted from their territorial waters, as they have never consented to the presence of fish farms in their unceded territory. This is a violation of their Indigenous rights and title to their land and resources. After some thirty years of saying no to fish farms, the Musgamagw **Dzawada'enuxw served yet another eviction notice to the fish farms in August of 2016.** Willie Moon confirmed with us that Minister Dominic LeBlanc has not, to date, responded to him on fish farms in his territory. Unfortunately, the farms are still there, and fish farm corporations are investing heavily in the expansion of open net pen aquaculture even as B.C. moves towards the unthinkable - extinction of Pacific wild salmon. The same salmon that swim up the Fraser/Thompson rivers also swim past fish farms on the coast. Indigenous governments along the Fraser/Thompson rivers long opposed to fish

farms are in solidarity with Indigenous people on the coast who are evicting fish farms from their territorial waters, as fish farms also threaten their right to a salmon fishery, which they have depended upon since time immemorial.

In 2016, your management of the Fraser River salmon resulted in the lowest return of Fraser sockeye ever reported, while Alaska, which has no fish farms on its coast, enjoys enormous returns.

We are reporting these violations to you, and thus we are holding you accountable to exercise your responsibility and respond to this situation. We are asking you to report on the immediate actions you will take to address the urgency of protecting wild salmon from fish farms and respecting Indigenous rights and title.

Sincerely yours,

Eddie Gardner, Elder of Skwah First Nation & President of Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance

CC DFO Minister Dominic LeBlanc  
 Andrew Weaver, MLA Oak Bay, Leader of the B.C. Green Party  
 Hon. Scott Fraser, B.C. Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
 B.C. DFO Regional Director, Andrew Thompson  
 A/Director, Aquaculture Management Division, Karen Calla  
 B.C. DFO Director of Salmon, Jennifer Nener  
 George Quocksister Jr., Hereditary Chief, Awahwoo Tribe of the Laich-Wil-Tach Nation  
**Chief Willie Moon, Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw Nation**  
 UBCIC President, Grand Chief Stewart Phillips  
 Chief Judy Wilson, Neskonlith First Nation  
**Chief Michelle Lee Edwards, Sekw'el'wes First Nation**  
 Chief Alice McKay, Matsqui First Nation  
 Chief Ernie Crey, Cheam First Nation  
 Chief Robert Gladstone, Shxway First Nation  
 Chief Darryll Bob, **Xaxli'p**  
 Chief Marilyn Gabriel, Kwantlen First Nation  
 Chief Susan James, Xwisten First Nation  
 Chief Susan Miller, Katzie First Nation  
 Chief Bob Combes, Skwah First Nation  
 Chief Rhoda Peters, Chawathil First Nation  
 Chief Bill Cranmer, Namgis First Nation  
 Councilor Robert Mountain, Namgis First Nation  
 Elizabeth May, MP, Leader of the Green Party of Canada  
 Chief Bob Chamberlin, First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance  
 David Suzuki Foundation  
 Watershed Watch Salmon Society  
 Bonny Glambeck, Clayoquot Sound  
 MP Fin Donnelly, NDP  
**Chief Bob Pasco, Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council**  
 Dawn Morrison, Wild Salmon Caravan & Indigenous Food Sovereignty activist  
 Dr. Alexandra Morton, Marine Biologist