



**Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance**

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The Honourable Mike Farnworth  
Minister of Public Safety  
27481 Lougheed HWY  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3B 6P2

**Subject: Non-Renewal of Fish Farm Tenures in June 2018**

Dear Minister,

Aquaculture companies are currently refilling their ocean pens with Atlantic salmon, which are spreading viruses, pollution and parasites to millions of young wild salmon now swimming past them. We are very concerned that the fish processing plant pipes spewing PRV-contaminated blood water have not been shut off as a precautionary measure to protect the out-migrating young sockeye salmon and Fraser River steelhead, even though many of these runs are collapsing, before proceeding with the investigation into the blood water. This situation puts wild salmon at further risk of irreversible harm as scientific evidence shows the Norwegian strain of PRV is causing HSMI in BC and that it is highly contagious. The blood water was also found to have very high levels of enterococcus bacteria, however no testing has been conducted to determine which species, its antibiotic resistance profile or its accumulation at the adjacent recreational beaches.

We ask for your support in ensuring the blood water pipes from fish farm processing plants are rerouted into tanks and not allowed to pour into the Fraser River salmon migration route. These are some reasons why the recent Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities convention that included mayors from 53 coastal communities voted “no” to open net-pen fish farms and “yes” to protecting wild salmon. The Canadian regulatory regime is doomed to continue failing to defend wild salmon from open net pen fish farms. First Nations all along the river are in solidarity with the Indigenous Nations in the Broughton Archipelago who are united in their 31-year quest to have fish farms removed from their territorial waters. All that is needed is a physical barrier between farmed Atlantic salmon and wild Pacific salmon, and this can only be accomplished by closed containment aquaculture on land.

Although we applaud the NDP entering into a process with the Namgis, Mamalilikulla and Musgamagw in the context of free, prior and informed consent, this must not be used to delay the essential decision to not renew fish farm tenures this coming June 20, 2018. Please note Article 25 of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People states: “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.”

We are concerned the BC NDP government will wait until June passes and then announce that the fish farm tenures are renewed because they are still in a process of discussing what “free, prior and informed consent” means. We hope this is not the case as such a cynical action would clearly violate the intent of UNDRIP. We

are also concerned that the NDP will allow the industry to grow out the fish put into the farms after the First Nations and government made it clear these tenures may not be renewed. The Namgis are now engaged in an expensive lawsuit to stop the transfer of piscine reovirus-infected fish into their territory, which is also the law in Canada under section 56 of the Fishery (General) Regulations. It is abundantly clear that this is an opportunity to live up to the commitments to UNDRIP. Instead of any further delays, we are urging your NDP government to collaborate with Indigenous stewards of their water and resources by removing fish farms from their territorial waters. These Indigenous leaders and millions of British Columbians would celebrate an announcement on the NDP government decision that these fish farm tenures will not be renewed this June. It would be a most welcome and refreshing act of reconciliation.

This is also an international issue and concern, as BC's neighboring Washington State chose to phase out open net-pen fish farms along their coast. Citizens in both Washington State and British Columbia see collaboration as extremely important to make our shared Salish Sea become an open net pen fish farm free zone as an essential measure to begin rebuilding wild salmon stocks which swim across our marine border. Our other neighbour, Alaska, also does not allow fish farms along their coast, and neither do California and Oregon. Elsewhere in the world, including in Norway, there is a movement towards land-based aquaculture. Canadians are prepared to invest in this technology and make BC a leader in this form of aquaculture, which enjoys high market demand. To follow in this direction would help protect and restore wild salmon stocks.

We look forward to your response.

Eddie Gardner  
President, wild salmon Defenders Alliance

CC: Chief Don Svanvik, Namgis First Nation; Chief Alice McKay, Matsqui First Nation; Grand Chief Stewart Phillips, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs; Chief Bob Chamberlin, First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance; Chief Judy Wilson, Skat'sin te Secwepemc, Neskonlith; Chief Michelle Lee Edwards, Sekw'el'was (Cayoose Creek Band); Chief Robert Gladstone, Shxwhá:y Village, Chilliwack; Chief Robert Combes, Skwah First Nation, Chilliwack; Sandy Budd, MapleCreek Watershed Streamkeepers Society; David Suzuki; Ernest Alfred; Chief Ernie Crey; Kurt Beardslee, Executive Director, Wild Fish Conservancy Northwest, Washington

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