

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

June 17, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark
Carney
Prime Minister of Canada
Email: pm@pm.gc.ca

The Honourable Joanne Thompson
Minister of Fisheries
Email: [DFO.Minister-
Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.Minister-Ministre.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)



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Re: Upholding the 2029 Transition from Open Net-Pen Fish Farms in British Columbia

Dear Prime Minister Carney and Minister Thompson,

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) writes to urge the Government of Canada to uphold and fully implement the announced 2029 transition away from open net-pen salmon farming in British Columbia waters.

Wild salmon are foundational to the cultures, governance systems, economies, food security, and ways of life of First Nations throughout British Columbia. The protection and restoration of wild salmon populations remain a shared priority for many First Nations and continues to be advanced through numerous resolutions, advocacy efforts, and Nation-led stewardship initiatives across the province.

Over many years, significant concerns have been raised by First Nations, scientists, and wild salmon advocates regarding the risks posed by open net-pen fish farms to wild salmon populations. These concerns have been consistently identified through federal review processes and scientific assessments. The 2012 Cohen Commission concluded that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) must demonstrate that fish farm operations pose no more than minimal risk to Fraser River sockeye salmon, while the subsequent 2016 Auditor General report found that DFO had not sufficiently implemented these recommendations.

In the Discovery Islands decisions, the federal government applied the precautionary principle in determining not to reissue fish farm licences. Those decisions were subsequently upheld through judicial review proceedings, affirming the Minister's authority to act in protection of wild salmon where scientific uncertainty and risk remain present. Most recently, the 2026 science statement released by the Pacific Salmon Foundation reaffirmed that the same core concerns regarding open net-pen fish farming continue to remain unresolved.

The FNLC acknowledges that the Government of Canada announced in 2024 its intention to transition away from open net-pen salmon farming in British Columbia by 2029. That announcement was clearly premised on the protection

and rebuilding of wild salmon populations and reflected growing recognition of the risks posed by open net-pen fish farms to wild salmon in British Columbia. Since that time, First Nations have participated in transition planning and engagement processes in good faith. However, there is increasing concern regarding the lack of transparency surrounding the outcomes of the final transition planning phase, the absence of timelines regarding consultation on future regulations and licensing frameworks, and indications that implementation efforts may have stalled.

The FNLC urges the Government of Canada to publicly reaffirm its commitment to the 2029 transition away from open net-pen salmon farming in British Columbia and to provide clarity regarding the status of the transition planning process, including the release of the outstanding Phase 4 outcomes and reporting.

The FNLC further calls on Canada to continue engaging meaningfully with First Nations regarding future regulatory frameworks, licensing conditions, and the development of closed containment approaches. The FNLC also notes concerns raised by the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance regarding the potential for technology development initiatives or undefined transition approaches to effectively prolong open net-pen operations in British Columbia, undermining both the intent of the 2029 transition and broader wild salmon rebuilding efforts, while continuing to uphold the precautionary principle in all decisions affecting wild salmon and their habitats.

This work remains critically important to the long-term protection and rebuilding of wild salmon populations in British Columbia. It also represents an important opportunity for Canada to demonstrate its commitment to reconciliation, environmental stewardship, and collaborative decision-making with First Nations.

The FNLC is requesting a meeting with Prime Minister Carney to discuss the implementation of the 2029 transition and opportunities to collaboratively advance wild salmon rebuilding as a broader Nation Building project grounded in partnership with First Nations.

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



Robert Phillips



Hugh Braker

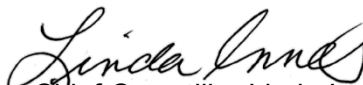


Huy'wu'qw Shana Thomas

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Councillor Linda Innes



Chief Marilyn Slett

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Terry Teegee