

# OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

FOUNDING HEAD OFFICE  
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way  
Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1  
Tel: 250-828-9746  
Fax: 250-828-0319



VANCOUVER OFFICE  
401 - 312 Main Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 2T2  
Tel: 604-684-0231  
Fax: 604-684-5726  
1-800-793-9701  
Email: [ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca](mailto:ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca)  
Web: [www.ubcic.bc.ca](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca)

## News Release

June 22, 2022

### UBCIC Welcomes Announcement that Canada is Phasing Out Fish Farms in Discovery Islands

(Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – June 22, 2022) Today, Federal Minister Joyce Murray of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard announced a transition planning process for fish farms in British Columbia. This will include consultations with First Nations Title and Rights holders and with industry. The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) welcomes this announcement and calls for this process to be a concrete step towards the complete removal of fish farms from BC oceans.

Discovery Islands licenses have been extended until January 2023 with specific industry consultations intending to respond to a recent judicial review ruling. Other licenses across the province were reissued for two years with a one-year transition planning process and consultations to inform a final Transition Plan. Financial resources for First Nations to participate in Transition Planning is essential to ensuring meaningful consultation and engagement.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated, “The vast majority of First Nations in BC oppose open net pen fish farming due to the detrimental effects it has on wild salmon. All First Nations have territories which include either oceans, rivers, streams or lakes, and every First Nation will be impacted by long term decisions about fish farms including those in the Discovery Islands. Fish farms seriously and severely impact our Title lands and waters. Water is contaminated, poisoning salmon, shellfish, and other marine life. The immediate dangers include disease and pathogens which Justice Cohen spoke of as a potentially irreversible impact to BC Wild Salmon. Such risks are completely unacceptable when Wild Salmon form a critical food source for approximately 90% of First Nations across BC.”

“While we welcome the Transition Planning announced today, UBCIC seeks confirmation that the transition plan will truly be a transition out of open net pen fish farms with no consideration for creating longer term licenses with new Conditions of License,” stated Chief Don Tom, UBCIC Vice-

President. “Salmon is central to First Nations cultures, traditions and economies throughout our territories. Salmon stocks have steadily declined at an alarming rate, leaving some runs functionally extinct.”

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, UBCIC Secretary-Treasurer commented, “A variety of factors are responsible for the drop in salmon stocks, including overfishing, climate change, sediment from industrial forestry, natural disasters such as the 2019 Big Bar Slide, and the introduction of pathogens including Piscine Reo-Virus (PRV), Heart and Skeletal Muscle Inflammation (HSMI), and hazardous levels of parasitic sea lice. Reports published by fish farm owners Mowi, Cermaq and Grieg Seafood, indicated 33% of salmon farms across all regions exceeded government-mandated sea lice limits. An independent study found 94% of sampled juvenile wild salmon migrating through the Discovery Islands were infected with the parasite, which is lethal to the fish.”

By [Resolution 2022-28](#), the UBCIC Chiefs Council has demanded that the federal and provincial governments prioritize and commit to the protection and enhancement of wild salmon and salmon habitat including placing a moratorium on new licenses for open-net salmon farming in the Discovery Islands, fulfilling the 2025 salmon farming phase-out commitments expressed in the Open-Net Transition Plan’s initial engagement as soon as possible, and passing biodiversity legislation that addresses wild salmon management and protection of salmon habitat. While the UBCIC welcomes Minister Murray’s announcement, the renewal of fish farm licenses must be a temporary measure to allow for meaningful consultation with all Title and Rights holders in BC in the process of removing all fish farms from the ocean, as committed to in Minister Murray’s 2021 Mandate letter.

-30-

Media inquiries:

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, 250-490-5314

Chief Don Tom, Vice-President, 604-290-6083

Kukpi7 Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer, c/o 604-842-2977

*UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.*

For more information please visit [www.ubcic.bc.ca](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca)