

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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July 12, 2022

Open Letter: UBCIC Chiefs Council Calls for Protection of Pacific Wild Salmon Habitat

Dear Minister Joyce Murray and Minister Josie Osborne,

In BC the current state of wild salmon and wild salmon habitat is in absolute crisis. The viability of pacific wild salmon stocks and their full life-cycle habitat in British Columbia are increasingly degraded from the confluence of climate change impacts, ineffective fisheries conservation, pollution and habitat destruction from industrial natural resource exploitation and salmon aquaculture. Wild salmon runs in British Columbia, many of which have been identified as threatened, endangered and species of special concern, rely on the health and ecological integrity of their habitat across their seasonal migrations and lifecycles.

The UBCIC Chiefs Council recently met and unanimously passed Resolution 2022-28 “Protecting Pacific Wild Salmon Habitat,” on June 2, 2022 (enclosed).

The UBCIC Chiefs Council demands 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. The UBCIC Chiefs Council also extends invitations to decision-makers at the federal and provincial ministries and agencies relevant to the protection of wild salmon habitat to regularly provide updates to and take questions from Chiefs on the status of wild salmon runs in British Columbia.

The UBCIC also reiterates its longstanding call, articulated in numerous Resolutions including 2002-06, 2006-42, 2009-35, 2009-36 and 2018-07, for the federal and provincial governments to meaningfully consult with First Nations to prioritize measures that protect and enhance pacific

wild salmon habitat. The requirement to consult is outlined by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement. Articles 26(2), 29(1), 32(1) and 34 of *UNDRIP* must guide governments actions that impact pacific wild salmon habitat to fulfill their commitments under *UNDRIP*.

Since the passing of Resolution 2022-28, the Discovery Islands licenses were extended until January 2023. This extension 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. Furthermore, we call for the immediate revision of the Conditions of License to include more substantial oversight and consequences for breaches of the regulations. Time and time again, industry has proven that self-regulation and irregular audits by government are insufficient to identify and address infringements in a timely manner. Combined with the lack of significant penalties for violating the regulations, the Conditions of License are inadequate and do not deter noncompliance, which contributes to the ongoing degradation of pacific wild salmon habitat.

We look forward to your response.

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
President



Chief Don Tom
Vice-President



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson
Secretary-Treasurer

CC: UBCIC

Premier John Horgan

Prime Minister Trudeau

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS CHIEFS COUNCIL

JUNE 2ND- JUNE 3RD, 2022

MUSQUEAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, X^WMƏƏK^WƏY^ƏM (MUSQUEAM TERRITORY)

Resolution no. 2022-28

RE: Protecting Pacific Wild Salmon Habitat

WHEREAS the current state of wild salmon and wild salmon habitat in BC are in crisis. The viability of wild pacific salmon stocks and their full life-cycle habitat in British Columbia are increasingly degraded from the confluence of climate change impacts, ineffective fisheries conservation, pollution and habitat destruction from industrial natural resource exploitation and salmon aquaculture;

WHEREAS wild salmon runs in British Columbia, many of which have been identified as threatened, endangered and species of special concern, rely on the health and ecological integrity of their habitat across their seasonal migrations and lifecycles;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

Article 26(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories, and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.

Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

Article 34: Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards.

WHEREAS Fisheries and Oceans Canada has continually prioritized aquaculture and commercial fisheries over wild salmon conservation and Indigenous rights to harvest salmon for food, social, and ceremonial needs; and

WHEREAS Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) Resolutions 2016-40, 2019-59, 2020-15, 2020-21, and 2021-56 call for the UBCIC Chiefs Council to work with First Nations and like-minded organizations to conserve wild salmon and to advocate for the recovery of wild salmon runs.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council fully supports including the protection of wild salmon and salmon habitat and management as a standing agenda item at Chiefs Councils and Assemblies and extending invitations to decision-makers at the federal and provincial ministries and agencies relevant to the protection of wild salmon habitat to regularly provide updates to and take questions from Chiefs on the status of wild salmon runs in British Columbia;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council demands that the federal and provincial governments prioritize and commit to the protection and enhancement of wild salmon and salmon habitat including a 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; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive to work with like-minded organizations in efforts to protect wild salmon and salmon habitat.

Moved: Chief James Hobart, Spuzzum First Nation
Seconded: Chief Brian Tate, Ditidaht First Nation
Disposition: Carried
Date: June 2, 2022