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PRESS RELEASE

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Calling on DFO Minister Shea, End the Silence

The UBCIC calls upon the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Minister Gail Shea to get on with the pressing work at hand of developing new Fish Farm regulations with First Nations. The court mandated deadline of February 10, 2010 is fast approaching and the silence from Minister Shea's office is completely unacceptable.

The BC First Nations Fisheries Council and First Nation Aquaculture Working Group are ready to begin this critical work and are supported by Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), First Nations Summit and the BC Assembly of First Nations resolutions. The proposed developmental framework features engagement of First Nations that have Fish Farms actively operating within their territories.

The recent escape of an estimated 40,000 Atlantic salmon, from a Marine Harvest Canada Fish Farm at Port Elizabeth in the Broughton Archipelago certainly underlines the great urgency for closed containment technology to be quickly embraced, developed and implemented. This is consistent with the Special Legislative Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture and the Pacific Salmon Forums final reports.

Furthermore, the UBCIC insists that Minister Shea immediately convey to the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands that any provincial expansions on existing licenses or issuance of new Fish Farms will effectively poison the work environment in developing these new Fish Farm Regulations.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President stated "The deafening silence from Minister Shea, at a time when leadership is most needed, is very upsetting. First Nations are organized, mandated and ready to address this extremely time-sensitive issue, it appears Minister Shea is not."

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