



Subject line only: BC First Nations open letter to Premier re: duty to consult, wild salmon management and salmon farming

June 1, 2015

To: Premier Christy Clark

We the undersigned chiefs applaud the recent federal court decision to disallow the salmon farming industry transfer of fish infected with viruses to open net pens. We understand the Minister of Fisheries can still override the Fisheries Act and allow this kind of transfer. We are in solidarity with the Wild Salmon Caravan of May 10-14, and the over 108,888 people who signed the petition that was delivered to you on May 27 in the Provincial Legislature, both asking you to:

Not issue Licenses of Occupation to the salmon farms trying to expand in British Columbia. Wild salmon are much too important to the world to risk for a dirty industry that refuses to contain its waste and pollutes our oceans.

The salmon farming salmon industry has lost their social license. Wild salmon that we have title and rights to are currently being exposed to untreated farmed salmon effluent throughout their migration routes along coastal British Columbia. Our fishers have witnessed too many pre-spawn deaths, salmon discolored with open sores, too weak to swim upstream and escaped farmed Atlantic salmon.

Governments and corporations must honour the duty to consult with, and obtain the consent of First Nation titleholders on industrial projects impacting their respective territories and Aboriginal rights. This includes salmon farming as it poses potential grave threat to First Nations right to a fishery. Justice Bruce Cohen concluded in his commission report that fish farms may pose serious or irreversible harm to wild salmon due to disease, but his report and recommendations have been virtually ignore at all levels of government.

Given the mounting evidence that fish farms on wild salmon migration routes are a threat to our wild salmon, we are writing you to inform you that the Province of BC must not expand existing farms, offer new licenses of occupation or renew fish farm leases without our consent. In addition, there must be immediate independent and transparent testing of farmed salmon in the hatcheries determine whether they have viruses or diseases *before* they are placed on the migration routes of Fraser River salmon.

This letter will be further circulated throughout the Fraser River watershed.

Chief James Hobart, Spuzzum First Nation, NNTC Fisheries Political Liaison, (250) 490-5314
Grand Chief Stewart Phillips, Union of BC Indian Chiefs (250) 490-5314
Chief Michelle Lee Edwards, Sekw'el'wes First Nation
Chief Lee Spahan, Coldwater Indian Band
Chief Robert Combes, Skwah First Nation
Chief Judy Wilson, Neskonlith Indian Band, Secretary-Treasurer UBCIC
Chief Marilyn Gabriel, Kwantlen First Nation
Chief Aaron Sam, Lower Nicola Indian Band