

August 6, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable John Horgan, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Prime Minister and Premier,

Re: Urgent measures required to protect British Columbia's wild salmon

We write to you representing an unprecedented co-operative effort among commercial and recreational fishing organizations, religious organizations, marine tourism operators and environmental groups. We are united by our deep concern for the survival of wild salmon and support for the call from the First Nations Leadership Council to remove salmon farms from west coast waters. We ask for a meeting with you at your earliest possible convenience to discuss how your governments intend to honour their commitments to the First Nations and people of British Columbia concerning the protection and rebuilding of our wild salmon stocks.

You are both commended for policy statements and initiatives strongly supporting indigenous title and rights and the protection of wild salmon. We are concerned, however, that the value of all that you have done is currently undermined by the continued practice of open netpen salmon farming on the migratory paths of wild salmon.

While the commercial salmon industry, First Nations, and recreational anglers are facing major closures of fisheries in response to the impact of the Big Bar landslide on the Fraser River, the salmon farm industry is not being held to the same principal of risk aversion that guides the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' management of the wild salmon resource.

The risk posed by salmon farms is proven beyond question by the impacts to migrating wild salmon reported by independent biologists this year. Sea lice outbreaks on salmon farms this spring resulted in unnatural infestations on outmigrating smolts, particularly in the Discovery Islands:

- 99% of sockeye salmon were infected with an average of 9 lice per fish
- 90% of pink and chum salmon were infected with an average of 5 lice per fish

Infestations at these levels are lethal and no regulatory or therapeutic measure employed by the Department or industry has been effective to control them. This is not surprising; no salmon farming region in the world has been able to control lice. No other salmon farming region in the world still has commercially viable stocks of wild salmonids, either.

This year's reports have raised concerns that the consequence to the 2022 Adams River sockeye run that has just migrated through the Discovery Islands may be catastrophic. The 2022 run is the dominant year

of the 4-year sockeye cycle and its loss would have profound impacts on the economy, ecology and culture of our communities, as well as on the rights of First Nations.

Prime Minister, your government promised to respect and act upon the recommendations of the 2012 Cohen Commission of Inquiry into Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River. Recommendation 19 states,

“On September 30, 2020, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans should prohibit net-pen salmon farming in the Discovery Islands (fish health sub-zone 3-2) unless he or she is satisfied that such farms pose at most a minimal risk of serious harm to the health of migrating Fraser River sockeye salmon. The Minister’s decision should summarize the information relied on and include detailed reasons. The decision should be published on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ website.”

We call on you to honour this promise by directing your Minister of Fisheries to ensure the salmon farms in the Discovery Islands are closed by September 30, 2020.

Premier Horgan, last year you urged British Columbians to “put aside their “petty differences” and work to develop a provincial strategy for protecting failing wild salmon stocks.” Your government is responsible for the land tenures occupied by these farms. We have come together to call on you to retire the licences of occupation in the Discovery Islands by September 30, 2020.

The Discovery Islands salmon farms are not the only ones threatening wild salmon survival and we do not intend, by making these demands, to suggest that the removal of all salmon farms from British Columbia’s waters does not remain our highest priority. However, Prime Minister, your promise to us was to remove all of the farms by 2025. It is clear to us that Fraser River sockeye, and all of the other species of salmon migrating through the Discovery Islands, cannot withstand another five years of this kind of infection pressure.

Sincerely,



Mike Griswold, Vice-President
Gulf Trollers Association

Daniel Billy, Elder
We Wai Kai First Nation



The Most Rev’d Melissa Skelton,
Archbishop
Bishop of the Diocese of New
Westminster
Anglican Church of Canada



Tony Allard, Chair
Wild Salmon Forever



Willie Mitchell, President/Partner
Tofino Resort + Marina



Rev. S. Blair Odney, President
Pacific Mountain Regional Council
United Church of Canada



Dane Chauvel, Founder & CEO
Organic Ocean



Ed Bianchi, Program Manager
Kairos Canada



Kathy Scarfo,
West Coast Trollers Association

Greg Gower,
Area G Advisors



SEASMOKE

WHALEWATCHING

Hayley Shephard, Owner/Operator
Seasmoke Whale Watching



Richard Hagensen, Chair
Council of Canadians Campbell River
Chapter



ANGLICAN DIOCESE
OF CALEDONIA

The Right Reverend David TJ Lehmann,
Bishop
Diocese of Caledonia
Anglican Church of Canada



Joy Thorkelson, President
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Garry Henckel, Captain
Aboriginal Journeys Whale Watching &
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Dave Mackay, President
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GREENPEACE

Sarah King,
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Darrel McEachern, President
Area E Gillnetters Association

Carol Brown, President
Prince Rupert Environmental Society

Chris Ashton, President
Area B Seine Association



Hannah Askew, Executive Director
Sierra Club BC

Darrel McEachern, President
Area D Gillnetters Association



Stan Proboszcz,
Science and Campaign Advisor
Watershed Watch Salmon Society



Sonia Strobel, Co-founder & CEO
Skipper Otto Community Supported
Fishery



Alexandra Morton
Pacific Coast Wild Salmon Society



Sid Keay,
Duncanby Lodge



Christianne Wilhelmson,
Executive Director
Georgia Strait Alliance



Chris Genovali, Executive Director
Raincoast Conservation Foundation



Bonny Glambeck and
Dan Lewis,
Clayoquot Action



Tim & Kelli McGrady, Co-owners
Farewell Harbour Lodge



Karen Wristen, Executive Director
Living Oceans Society



Jenn Broom,
Ocean Light II Adventures



Jeh Custerra
Friends of Clayoquot Sound



Tony Allard, CEO
Good Hope Cannery



Greg Knox,
SkeenaWild Conservation Trust



Randy Burke, Captain/Director
Bluewater Adventures



Kurt Beardslee, Executive Director
Wild Fish Conservancy



Pat Moss, Chair
Friends of Wild Salmon



Jay Ritchlin, Director-General,
Western Canada
David Suzuki Foundation