



# BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Road  
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3  
Website: [www.bcafn.ca](http://www.bcafn.ca)

## BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY

Resolution 03/2020

Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 101 Gordon St., Nanaimo, BC  
March 4 & 5, 2020

**SUBJECT:** TRANSITION FROM OPEN NET-PEN FISH FARMING

**MOVED BY:** CHIEF DALTON SILVER, SUMAS FIRST NATION

**SECONDED BY:** CHIEF DON TOM, TSARTLIP FIRST NATION

**DECISION:** CARRIED

### WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations rely on marine resources in the ocean and rivers for their livelihoods, way of life, health, and well-being, and have a sacred responsibility to protect fish from the devastating impacts of open net-pen aquaculture;
- B. open net-pen fish farming has long generated public concern for both its environmental devastation and its health consequences for wild aquatic species, becoming focal points for salmon related diseases and viruses, including Heart and Skeletal Muscle Inflammation (HSMI), Piscine Reo-Virus (PRV), for hazardous levels of parasitic sea-lice impacting wild migratory juvenile salmon, and for unnatural levels of predation targeting vulnerable herring stocks;
- C. 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 committed to implement, affirms:  
*Article 26: 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...*

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020, at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre, Snuneymuxw, Nanaimo, BC

A blue ink signature of Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief.

Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

*Article 29: Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources...;*

- D. the containment of hundreds of thousands of fish effectively transfers the economic burden of managing fish waste to the environment and surrounding communities;
- E. fish are economically exploited and suffer immensely due to the cramped conditions and lack of space in fish farms, with high rates of injury and mortality;
- F. in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed Indigenous Peoples' rights in the land (including waters) and rights to determine its usage, requiring full consent of Indigenous Nations for government actions on Aboriginal Title Lands;
- G. BCAFN Resolutions 2015-04(a), 2016-01, 2016-16, 2016-17, 2016-18, 2017-10 (d) (e), 2017-16 and 2018-13 confirm BCAFN's commitment to work in solidarity with like-minded organizations, BC First Nations with respect to fisheries and aquaculture issues and to work with First Nations to conserve wild salmon stocks and advocate for and support the recovery and restoration of wild salmon stocks;
- H. On October 31, 2012 Commissioner Cohen released his report and recommendations into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River and recommended a number of changes to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans policies, practices and management in relation to the sustainability of the Fraser River sockeye fishery;
- I. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly has called on the Federal and Provincial governments to implement the Cohen Commission's principles and recommendations; and
- I. the Government of Canada has committed to work with the province of British Columbia and Indigenous communities to create a responsible plan to transition from open net-pen salmon farming by 2025 and develop an Aquaculture Act.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

- 1. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly supports a transition away from open net-pen aquaculture led by First Nations in favour of more humane and sustainable practices;
- 2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the Regional Chief to work with like-minded organizations and the Governments of Canada and BC on a plan to transition from open net-pen aquaculture to lower-impact alternatives by 2025; and
- 3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Minister of Department of Fisheries and Oceans to ensure Indigenous rights are foundational to federal aquaculture legislation and to co-develop legislation with Indigenous Title and Rights holders.

---

**Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of March 2020, at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre, Snuneymuxw, Nanaimo, BC**



---

**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**