



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1004 Landooz Road
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
Website: www.bcafn.ca

BCAFN 17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
November 17 & 18, 2020
Online via Zoom

Resolution 08/2020

SUBJECT: THE DECLINE OF PACIFIC SALMON AND SUPPORT FOR A COHESIVE BC
FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES STRATEGY

MOVED BY: CHRIS LEWIS, PROXY, SQUAMISH NATION

SECONDED BY: CHIEF DON TOM, TSARTLIP FIRST NATION

DECISION: CARRIED

WHEREAS:

- A. Pacific Salmon are integral to the culture, economy, and livelihood of First Nations throughout BC, but the chronic decline of Pacific Salmon has been decades in the making, and has now reached catastrophic proportions, with some stocks facing potential extirpation, and/or extinction;
- B. Reconciliation with BC First Nations cannot be fully realized whilst the decline of Pacific salmon stocks negatively affects the social, cultural and societal constructs of BC First Nations communities;
- 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:
 - i. 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

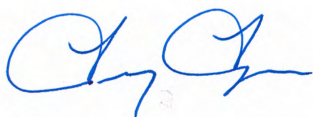
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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

- or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
- ii. 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 historic Sparrow Decision of the Supreme Court of Canada (1990) recognized existing Indigenous rights to fish for food and ceremonial purposes ahead of other user groups and set out that priority access to Aboriginal fisheries was second only to conservation;
- E. Canada continues to manage fisheries with an outdated approach that is based on a harvest model of abundance (of fish), protecting fisheries, and avoiding priority access principles;
- F. 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 with First Nations and the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) to conserve wild salmon stocks and advocate for and support the recovery and restoration of wild salmon stocks;
- G. By BCAFN Resolution 02/2020, "Call to Action on Historic Low Salmon Returns," the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly called upon the Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to investigate the historically low wild salmon returns in Canada in 2019 and to create a Director of Wild Salmon, Pacific Region who would be a qualified First Nations individual that could steer the DFO and coordinate research to identify the cause(s) of or factors contributing to wild salmon run collapses; and
- H. The FNFC is currently undertaking several projects to protect and restore Pacific salmon stocks, including: developing, through its Salmon Coordinating Committee, a coherent strategy among First Nation regional fishery organizations to rebuild Pacific salmon stocks; launching the development of an Indigenous Technical Advisory Network (ITAN) to bring together provincial science and technical experts to develop a strategy to rebuild salmon stocks and identify a comprehensive package of mitigation measures; and with the Pacific Salmon Commission's First Nations Caucus, working to re-position the Caucus' relationship with DFO and with the Canadian Caucus, in order to more effectively bring forward BC First Nations interests and priorities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

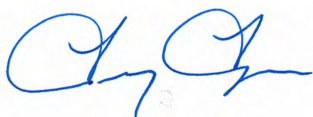
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1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly fully support the First Nations Fisheries Council's (FNFC) development of a cohesive BC First Nations Fisheries Strategy that would let First Nation regional fishery organizations work together to advise the government and coordinate strategic action to restore salmon stocks;
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and staff to work with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nation Summit, as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), to help the FNFC develop a coherent strategic approach to salmon fisheries in BC by identifying key priorities, including the status of Pacific salmon and priority access, as well as providing resourcing and support for leadership participation and coordinated engagement with the Crown;
3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and staff to work with the UBCIC and FNS as the FNLC and FNFC, to include in the strategy items related to:
 - a. Climate Change impacts
 - b. Accumulated impacts to all water tributaries, oceans and lakes including fish habitat
 - c. Full implementation of Cohen Commission recommendations
 - d. Impacts to our way of life
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the Regional Chief and staff to develop a communications plan including a strong digital advocacy campaign to build awareness and support for a cohesive and engaged BC First Nations Fisheries strategy;
5. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly urge the federal and provincial governments, alongside the relevant ministries and officials, to re-invigorate their working relationship with the FNFC and FNLC by committing to meet regularly to discuss and advance action on Pacific Salmon, including the development and implementation of a cohesive BC First Nations Wild Fisheries Strategy;
6. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call upon the federal and provincial governments to support the FNFC and FNLC's work on developing a First Nations Wild Fisheries Strategy by providing adequate resourcing and funding so that the FNLC and FNFC can consult and engage with First Nation communities and First Nations fisheries organizations, ensuring priority dialogue to inform the Strategy.

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