



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

1992 Landooz Road
Prince George, BC V2K 5S3
Website: www.bcafn.ca

BCAFN SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
March 4 & 5, 2026
In person & online via Zoom

Resolution 05(a)/2026

**SUBJECT: REQUIRE MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION ON AQUACULTURE REGULATIONS,
LICENCE CONDITIONS, AND CLOSED CONTAINMENT DEFINITIONS**

MOVED BY:

SECONDED BY:

DECISION:

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia are inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights holders with jurisdiction over their lands, waters, and resources, and continue to exercise Indigenous laws, governance, and stewardship responsibilities to protect wild salmon, marine ecosystems, and the well-being of their communities;
- B. the regulation, licensing, and management of industrial aquaculture directly affects First Nations' Aboriginal and treaty rights, including food, social, ceremonial, cultural, and economic practices, and therefore engages the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate;
- C. the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the Province of B.C., passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:

Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief

Article 26: Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories, and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied, or otherwise used or acquired.

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

Article 32: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands, territories, or resources;

- D. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is advancing work in 2026 on aquaculture regulations, licence conditions, and the transition to closed containment, and has developed multiple technical definitions of “closed containment” and related containment categories for industry reporting and policy purposes without meaningful consultation with First Nations;
- E. DFO currently utilizes several differing definitions of closed containment, including categories such as semi-enclosed containment that have previously been rejected by First Nations, and these definitions risk predetermining policy outcomes, transition pathways, and licence conditions without First Nations’ free, prior, and informed consent;
- F. DFO has indicated that consultations on new or amended aquaculture regulations, licence conditions, and closed containment approaches will take place in 2026, and past engagement processes have failed to adequately reflect First Nations’ positions, Indigenous knowledge, or the cumulative impacts of fish farms on wild salmon and First Nations' rights; and
- G. consultation that is rushed, under-resourced, overly technical, or conducted after key policy decisions are predetermined does not meet the constitutional duty to consult, is inconsistent with the UN Declaration, and undermines trust in federal decision-making.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirms that meaningful consultation on aquaculture regulations, licence conditions, and the definition, standards, and application of closed containment must occur prior to final decision-making, must be conducted in good faith, and must be consistent with inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous title and rights, laws, and governance systems;
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to ensure that upcoming consultations on aquaculture regulations and licence conditions:
 - a) are early, ongoing, and transparent, with draft materials shared well in advance;
 - b) include First Nations-led and regionally appropriate engagement processes;
 - c) meaningfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge, independent science, and cumulative effects analysis; and
 - d) provide adequate funding and capacity support to enable full First Nations participation;

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e) include direct consultation on how DFO defines, categorizes, and applies the term “closed containment” and other containment models in regulations, policy, and licence conditions;

3. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly asserts that consultation on regulations and licence conditions must not be used to legitimize predetermined outcomes, including the continuation of open net-pen fish farms, the advancement of semi-enclosed or other unproven interim technologies, or the adoption of closed containment definitions that have not been co-developed with First Nations, and must uphold the precautionary principle and wild salmon recovery objectives; and
4. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN and staff to work with First Nations, the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, and other like-minded organizations to seek funding from DFO and others to design a First Nations consultation and engagement process through a First Nations world view that respects and reflects First Nations rights, that informs and directs the Aquaculture Regulation Licence Conditions and Closed Containment Definitions, review, and for that process to create a First Nations driven Regulatory Impact Assessment Statement and a First Nations Socio Economic Impact Analysis Statement.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terry Teegee', is written over a horizontal line.

Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief