



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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

Resolution 05(b)/2026

SUBJECT: REJECT THE USE OF "SEMI-OPEN" FISH FARMS AS ACCEPTABLE TRANSITION TECHNOLOGY

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Decision:

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia are inherent title and rights holders with jurisdiction over their territories, lands, and waters, and have a sacred responsibility to protect salmon and marine ecosystems through independent and First Nations-led, science-based, precautionary decision-making;
- B. First Nations rely on marine resources in the ocean and rivers for their livelihoods, way of life, health, culture, and well-being, and have a sacred responsibility to protect salmon and marine ecosystems for present and future generations;
- C. open net-pen fish farming has long generated public concern due to its environmental and biological impacts, including the transmission of pathogens and diseases, elevated sea-lice infestations on juvenile salmon, discharge of untreated waste, and increased predation pressures on forage fish;
- D. so-called "semi-open," "semi-closed," or flow-through containment systems continue to discharge waste, pathogens, parasites, and effluent into surrounding waters and therefore do not meet the independent, First Nations-led, science-based precautionary standard required for wild salmon

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protection and recovery, nor meaningfully reduce risks to marine ecosystems or First Nations title and rights;

- E. 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 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: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories, and resources;

- F. the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard's decision to decline renewal of Discovery Islands fish farm licenses, and the Federal Court's 2024 affirmation of that decision, confirmed the appropriateness of applying a precautionary approach grounded in an independent science base and First Nations knowledge where scientific uncertainty and risk of serious harm exist; and
- G. the federal government has committed to banning open net-pen fish farms in British Columbia waters by 2029 yet continues to advance transition pathways and implementation measures that risk prolonging exposure of wild salmon to industrial aquaculture through interim technologies that lack proven effectiveness.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly rejects the use of "semi-open," "semi-closed," or flow-through fish farm systems as acceptable transition technologies, as they fail to meet the independent, First Nations-led, science-based precautionary principle affirmed through the Discovery Islands decision and Federal Court ruling, and continue to pose unacceptable risks to wild salmon, marine ecosystems, and inherent and constitutionally protected First Nations title and rights;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly reaffirms support for a rapid, precautionary, and First Nations-led transition away from open net-pen aquaculture to land-based closed-containment systems, where aquaculture is to occur at all, and only with the free, prior, and informed consent of affected First Nations;
3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia to cease promoting, funding, or approving semi-open containment systems within fish farm transition planning and to ensure that all implementation work between now and 2029 is aligned with wild salmon recovery objectives, Indigenous law, independent science, and the UN Declaration; and
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN and staff to advocate, in collaboration with First Nations, the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance, and like-minded organizations, for transition

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policies and legislation grounded in precautionary science, Indigenous knowledge, and independent First Nations oversight, subject to available resources.

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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