



## BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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

**Resolution 05(d)/2026**

**SUBJECT: REBUILDING WILD SALMON AS A NATION BUILDING PROJECT**

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**Moved BY:**

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**SECONDED BY:**

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**DECISION:**

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. First Nations in British Columbia are inherent title and rights holders with jurisdiction over their lands, waters, and resources, and have governed, stewarded, and sustained wild salmon since time immemorial through Indigenous laws, knowledge systems, and responsibilities to future generations;
- B. wild Pacific salmon are foundational to First Nations cultures, food systems, economies, governance, and spiritual practices, and their continued decline represents an unjustified infringement on First Nations' food, social, and ceremonial rights and a failure of Crown stewardship obligations;
- C. the ongoing collapse of wild salmon stocks is a direct result of cumulative impacts including habitat degradation, climate change, ineffective fisheries management, industrial development, aquaculture, and failure to uphold inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous title and rights, and jurisdiction across watersheds and marine environments;
- D. the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia have made repeated political commitments to reconciliation, implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, food security, climate resilience, and watershed security, all of which are inextricably linked to the protection and rebuilding of wild salmon populations;

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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**

- 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 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights.

Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise used lands, waters, and resources.

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. for First Nations, wild salmon are living relatives central to culture, law, and identity, and because salmon depend entirely on the health of lands and waters to which First Nations hold inherent title and rights, there can be no meaningful reconciliation without reconciliation to the land and the restoration of the ecosystems that sustain First Nations cultures and ways of life;
- G. reconciliation cannot be meaningfully advanced while wild salmon continue to decline, watersheds remain degraded, and First Nations are excluded from decision-making over the ecosystems that sustain their Nations, cultures, and economies;
- H. rebuilding wild salmon populations presents a unique opportunity to advance Nation-to-Nation governance, Indigenous-led watershed and marine stewardship, climate adaptation, food security, and long-term economic resilience in ways that benefit both First Nations and all British Columbians; and
- I. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly has consistently affirmed through numerous resolutions the urgent need for Indigenous-led wild salmon recovery, protection of salmon habitat, watershed security, co-governance of water, and sustained long-term investment in salmon restoration, including through calls for trust funds, oversight mechanisms, and First Nations leadership in salmon governance.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly affirms that rebuilding wild Pacific salmon must be advanced as a Nation Building project, led by First Nations, grounded in First Nations laws and knowledge, and recognized as essential to reconciliation, food security, climate resilience and adaptation, and long-term sustainability;
2. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia to formally recognize wild salmon recovery as a core Nation-to-Nation priority, requiring coordinated, long-term, and First Nations-led action across fisheries management,

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habitat protection, watershed governance, and climate adaptation including rebuilding stocks where conditions have removed them from waterways;

3. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly asserts that meaningful rebuilding of wild salmon populations must include First Nations jurisdiction and decision-making authority, co-governance structures, and alignment with First Nations laws, key case law, the UN Declaration, and commitments to food sovereignty and water security; and
4. the BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly directs the BCAFN and staff to advocate, in collaboration with First Nations, the B.C. Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Summit as the First Nations Leadership Council, the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance, and like-minded organizations, for a comprehensive, First Nations-led wild salmon rebuilding strategy that reflects the scale, urgency, and Nation Building significance of the crisis.

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

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**Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief**