

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

June 16, 2011

Honourable Keith Ashfield
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
House of Commons, Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Ashfield,

Congratulations on your appointment as federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway. This letter is intended to provide you with an overview of the key issues facing First Nations pertaining to fisheries and aquaculture, and an introduction to both the First Nations Leadership Council and the BC First Nations Fisheries Council.

The First Nations Leadership Council (the "Leadership Council") is a collaborative political partnership and process between the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN), the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and the First Nations Summit (FNS). Following broad dialogue among BC First Nations to outline their fisheries and aquatic resources priorities in 2006, the Leadership Council published the BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan ("Action Plan"). One of the priorities identified in the Action Plan was the establishment of the First Nations Fisheries Council, a province-wide organization that is supported by, accountable to, and has balanced delegates of, British Columbia's 203 First Nations. The Leadership Council established the First Nations Fisheries Council in 2007 by resolution at each of the three organizations, and continues to provide high-level political advocacy in the area of fisheries and aquaculture informed by technical work of the First Nations Fisheries Council.

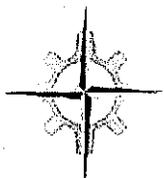
The First Nations Fisheries Council was tasked with implementing the Action Plan, bringing communities together, developing strategy and policy perspectives, and supporting First Nations in developing and implementing their fisheries and aquatic resource plans. The First Nations Fisheries Council has continued to incrementally implement objectives outlined under the Action Plan by facilitating dialogue among First Nations, and between First Nations and Fisheries & Oceans Canada. In May 2010, the First Nations Fisheries Council and Fisheries & Oceans Canada signed the Commitment to Action and Results, a document that commits both parties to seek collaboration in areas of mutual interest, including the four priority areas of Food, Social & Ceremonial Section 35(1) fisheries; Co-Management; Aquaculture; and Economic Access.



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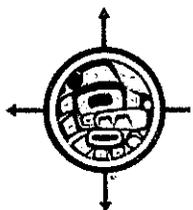
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The coming years will be a period of considerable transition for First Nations in the Pacific fisheries. The conclusion of substantive programming such as the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative "PICFI", the pending release of the final report from the Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River, and Fisheries & Oceans Canada's introduction of evolving governance frameworks, will unquestionably alter the operational and political climate in the Pacific Region.

The First Nations Leadership Council and the First Nations Fisheries Council endeavour to reflect the diversity in geography, perspectives and priorities of First Nations in British Columbia. As such, our efforts are aimed at increasing the overall participation of First Nations in all aspects of the Pacific fisheries. First Nations require full engagement and meaningful consultation in all processes that have the potential to infringe upon their rights. Some of the key issues we must discuss which are facing B.C. First Nations in regards to pacific fisheries are:

- Exploring and developing a co-management framework at the broad B.C. wide scale.
- The need for meaningful involvement in the interpretation and implementation of SCC court decisions (including but not limited to the Gladstone and Ahoushat decisions).
- The implementation process of the new Pacific Aquaculture Regulations and the issuance of aquaculture licenses which have the potential to infringe on the rights of B.C. First Nations.
- The need for proper and meaningful First Nation participation in the evolving Integrated Fishery Framework and the Sustainable Fishery's framework.
- Increased First Nation engagement in scientific processes that recognize the value of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.
- Capacity building at the Tier One level (First Nations internally) to increase the internal capacity of First Nations to meaningfully participate in all management processes.

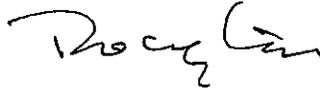
Recently, we understand that the First Nations Fisheries Council engaged in a positive and constructive meeting with Nadia Bouffard, Director General of Strategic Planning. We look forward to the First Nations Fisheries Council building on this existing momentum through increased collaboration with your Department on areas of mutual significance.

We seek an immediate, high-level discussion with you on the key issues facing First Nations in BC pertaining to fisheries and aquaculture. We also seek to further the working relationships between our organizations and the Department of Fisheries and Ocean. We look forward to your timely reply.

Yours truly,

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT:



Grand Chief Edward John Chief Douglas White III Kwulasultun Dan Smith

On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS:



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip Chief Bob Chamberlin Chief Marilyn Baptiste

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:



Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould

CC: First Nations Fisheries Council
Sue Farlinger, Regional Director General, DFO Pacific Region
Sarah Murdoch, Director of Treaty and Aboriginal Policy Directorate, DFO

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