



# FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

## RESOLUTION #0909.07

**SUBJECT: BC FIRST NATIONS' STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY ON  
AQUACULTURE**

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### WHEREAS

- A. First Nations in British Columbia have constitutionally protected Aboriginal title and rights that have been affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada and by international conventions and local and international instruments, including the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
- B. First Nations in British Columbia have Aboriginal title and rights to our lands, waters and resources, and these rights include the right to be self-determining and to manage our lands, waters, and resources according to our sovereign, inherent and collective responsibilities, laws and jurisdictions, for the benefit of future generations and the protection of indigenous species.
- C. As sovereign First Nations we have the right to protect, manage and derive social, cultural and economic benefits from the wealth of our lands, waters and resources.
- D. First Nations acknowledge the interdependence we have with one another and respectfully honour our commitment to work with one another where we share lands, waters and resources to maintain and develop resource development strategies and cooperative relationships built upon respect, transparency, openness, accountability and mutual trust.
- E. As First Nations, we respect that we have the right to determine our level of involvement and perspectives on the aquaculture industry based on each of our community's needs, aspirations and priorities.
- F. We acknowledge that the impacts of the aquaculture industry to ecosystems, fisheries and aquatic resources are not well understood, and in particular that the geographic scope of the potential impacts continue to be studied and analysed. Indeed, we understand that there is a strong possibility that impacts of this industry may extend beyond the proximity of the aquaculture farm sites into marine and freshwater ecosystems which includes the river systems of the interior.
- G. First Nations in British Columbia have a right to be fully informed and involved in any legislative, policy and or decision-making process pertaining to reform of the aquaculture industry as these changes have the potential to adversely impact on First Nations' title and rights.
- H. The principles of reconciliation, respect and recognition of First Nations' title and rights must be paramount in any legislative, policy or decision-making process regarding changes to the aquaculture industry. At a minimum, the honour of the Crown requires

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both the federal and provincial governments to minimize any infringement to Aboriginal title and rights, and to engage in appropriate consultation and accommodation processes with potentially affected First Nations.

- I. The Aquaculture Working Group was established by resolutions of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit and the BC Assembly of First Nations for the purpose of engaging the province of British Columbia to address and advocate for First Nations title and rights issues which have direct bearing on the management and regulation of the aquaculture industry.
- J. The First Nations Fisheries Council has been empowered by First Nations leadership in BC to implement the *BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan* and part of this task includes advocacy to advance title and rights, to build capacity, and to help facilitate discussions with the federal and provincial governments regarding the recognition of First Nations' inherent rights with respect to the management of fisheries and aquatic resources.
- K. On September 15, 2009 the First Nations Fisheries Council and the Aquaculture Working Group co-hosted a BC First Nations' Aquaculture meeting to discuss the development of a statement of solidarity among BC First Nations relating to aquaculture.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**

- 1. That the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly affirm the following principle statements for aquaculture, as endorsed by First Nations leaders and participants at the Aquaculture Meeting held on September 15, 2009:
  - a. That we recognize and respect each other's autonomy and support each other in exercising our respective title, rights and jurisdiction. This recognition and respect applies to each First Nation in terms of their involvement and stance on the aquaculture industry.
  - b. On Nation to Nation basis, First Nations need to be engaged from the most initial discussions when farm sites are being considered within our territories. Holding governments to their fiduciary obligations, we require involvement within the planning, management and decision-making process for siting of farms in our territories. This involvement is required in order to protect environmentally, socially, and culturally significant areas, to safeguard our traditional food sources, to secure the long-term health of wild salmon, and to protect our right to manage our territories.
  - c. That as Indigenous Nations of our respective territories', we require input into the day-to-day management of the aquaculture industry, as these decisions directly or indirectly impact on our communities, our title and rights, as well as our ways of life. We will work with Canada and British Columbia to incorporate a holistic or area management approach with respect to aquaculture that is responsive to local environmental factors and considerations, and which engages First Nations in a meaningful management role.

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- d. As Indigenous Nations of our respective territories, we require engagement in the science that guides decision-making on the management and regulation of the aquaculture industry. We need to be engaged and benefit from the open sharing of scientific information, the development and acceptance of new scientific tools, and the collection and analysis of data. We expect decisions to be made based on the best scientific information available. We further expect that our local and traditional knowledge will be respected and safeguarded as it is incorporated into the science that informs aquaculture decision-making.
  - e. That as the inherent stewards of our respective territories, we recognize the need to be involved in the monitoring and compliance of this dynamic industry to ensure that our title and rights are respected, our resources are safeguarded for future generations, and our indigenous species protected from unjustified harm or possible extinction.
  - f. That we commit to working in accordance with the messages outlined in this resolution to ensure that any actions taken in respect of the aquaculture industry are respectful of our rights, title, lands, waters and resources, are consistent with our common cultural belief systems, and improve our overall quality of life.
2. That the First Nations Summit Chiefs in Assembly call upon the First Nations Fisheries Council and the Aquaculture Working Group to communicate the principle statements outlined in this resolution to the Federal and Provincial governments, and to advocate for the engagement of First Nations at the national and community level in aquaculture management, regulation and decision-making.

**MOVED BY:** Chief Maureen Chapman, Skawahlook First Nation

**SECONDED BY:** Reg Seaweed, Quatsino First Nation

**DATE:** September 25, 2009

Passed via Omnibus First Nations Summit Resolution #0909.02 (Omnibus Resolution to adopt eight resolutions from the September 2009 First Nations Summit Meeting).

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ENDORSED BY:

  
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Dan Smith

  
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Grand Chief Doug Kelly

  
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Grand Chief Edward John