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FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

July 13, 2011

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

Dear Minister Ashfield,

Thank you for meeting with the First Nations Leadership Council and representatives of the B.C. First Nations Fisheries Council on July 7, 2011. We greatly appreciated this initial opportunity to discuss the key issues facing First Nations in B.C. pertaining to fisheries and aquaculture.

During the meeting, we highlighted the core systemic issues facing B.C. First Nations in working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), as well as provided specific examples of the challenges facing B.C. First Nations at the community level. We must collaboratively address these issues in order to benefit B.C. First Nations communities who rely on marine resources not only for sustenance, but for strong cultural and historical reasons.

We emphasized the need for commitment of an on-going, high-level, government-to-government relationship between the First Nations Leadership Council and yourself, as Minister of DFO. We strongly recommended entering into a formal Memorandum of Understanding, where we would outline our mutual commitments to work together on areas of shared interest and importance. We look forward to your positive response on this matter.

Given the brevity of the meeting on July 7, 2011, there is a clear and pressing need to further explore the issues identified, and to develop joint mechanisms in order to solicit meaningful change for B.C. First Nations communities in fisheries and aquaculture. We request a follow-up meeting at your earliest convenience. Together, we are confident that we can work towards measurable improvements in Pacific fisheries and aquaculture for First Nations people in British Columbia.

We look forward to your timely response, and to our next meeting.

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