

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

FOUNDING HEAD OFFICE
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1
Tel: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319



VANCOUVER OFFICE
Suite 401, 312 Main Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 2T2
Tel: 604-684-0231
Fax: 604-684-5726
1-800-793-9701
Email: ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca
Web: www.ubcic.bc.ca

News Release

February 11, 2019

DFO Must Engage First Nations to Revise Negligent Aquaculture Policy

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, B.C. – February 08, 2019) On Monday, February 4, 2019, the Federal Court ruled in favour of the 'Namgis First Nation and Alexandra Morton's challenge to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and their controversial policy to not test farmed salmon for the Piscine Reo-Virus (PRV) before transfer or release.

Over 80% of the open net-pen Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry is infected with PRV. Previously PRV was thought to have remained localized within the farmed Atlantic salmon species, but recent studies have confirmed that this virus has already and will continue to spread from infected salmon farms to already threatened wild Pacific salmon species.

PRV represents a significant threat to wild salmon populations and has been linked to the devastating heart and skeletal muscle inflammation disease, a disease responsible for devastating Norway's Atlantic salmon populations, both wild and farmed. The existence and potential transference of PRV to wild salmon underlies the urgency to immediately move open net-pen fish farms out of the water and into land-based closed containment facilities.

"The continued promotion of the aquaculture industry without a complete understanding of its impacts on wild salmon populations is representative of gross negligence and a dereliction of Canada's duty to protect the productivity of our oceans and the rights of Indigenous peoples", stated Chief Chamberlin, Vice-President of the UBCIC. He continued, "Healthy and abundant wild salmon runs are critical to the culture, wellbeing and livelihoods of Indigenous Nations throughout BC."

In alignment with the standards of the *UN Declaration* and our inherent rights to self-determination and self-government, First Nations must be involved in revising DFO's aquaculture policies.

For years, The UBCIC and the First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance have been strong supporters of the 'Namgis First Nation and Alexandra Morton's call to reform the fish farm industry and remain strong proponents of wild salmon health.

Media inquiries: Chief Bob Chamberlin, Vice-President of the UBCIC
Phone: (250) 974-8282