

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

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UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
CHIEFS COUNCIL

JUNE 27TH TO 28TH, 2018

RICHMOND, B.C., X^wMƏӨK^wƏY^əM (MUSQUEAM TERRITORY)

Resolution no. 2018-25

RE: Support for Further Study on the Targeted Management of Seal and Sea Lion Populations

WHEREAS the Salish Sea covering the Strait of Georgia to Puget Sound is home to a concentrated population of harbour seals, which are consumers of juvenile Chinook salmon and herring, which may have serious impacts on Chinook and herring stocks in the Salish Sea;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC, committed to implement, affirms:

Article 26

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned;

WHEREAS the reduction in the availability of Chinook salmon and herring has negative impacts upon the local orca populations, which rely upon Chinook salmon as a key food source, as well as impacting the availability for human consumption purposes;

WHEREAS a 2017 study published by the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, indicated that seals and sea lions in the Puget Sound area of the Salish Sea consume roughly nine times the amount of Chinook salmon that they consumed before 1970;

WHEREAS wildlife managers in the Puget Sound are working to recover the diminished Chinook salmon population, which are impacted by the over 50,000 harbor seals occupying the Salish Sea and consuming salmon;

WHEREAS US tribal leaders, as well as the Puget Sound Leadership Council, the governing body of the Puget Sound Partnership, are calling for a study of “targeted management” of seals and sea lions. This is in response to recent scientific findings suggesting that harbor seals and sea lions may be impacting and reducing the population of Chinook in Puget Sound (see the attached article, “Study would explore changes to protections for seals and sea lions” as published in the Encyclopedia of Puget Sound); and

WHEREAS in the US, a proposed white paper is expected to review the intersections and impacts of the seal and sea lion populations on Chinook.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council directs the UBCIC Executive to work with the First Nations Fisheries Council to call upon the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to conduct necessary management studies regarding impacts associated with the growing population of seals and sea lions in the Salish Sea upon fisheries, in particular salmon and herring stocks, and the potential decline of the population numbers.

Moved: Chief Don Svanvik, ‘Namgis First Nation
Seconded: Chief Dalton Silver, Sumas First Nation
Disposition: Carried
Date: June 28, 2018