

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

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News Release

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Federal Government's Ties to Fish Farm Industry and Monopoly on Research Hastening Demise of Wild Salmon

((X^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), Sk^wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C. – October 21, 2020) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is demanding transparency and accountability from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) regarding their continued jeopardization of wild salmon stocks. Following the DFO's recent announcement that open-net pen farms in BC's Discovery Islands pose a minimal risk to wild salmon, Dr. Kristi Miller-Saunders, head of the DFO's molecular genetics laboratory, has stated that the DFO remains beholden to the open-net farm industry, underplaying the risks to wild salmon in order to hold aloft a controversial industry.

Chief Dalton Silver, UBCIC Fisheries Representative, stated: "Echoing the concerns of many of our Indigenous leaders, including myself, Dr. Miller-Saunders stated that the DFO appears to be minimizing the risks to wild salmon from sea lice and viruses, while leveraging its conflicting role as regulator and fish farm advocate to prioritize the fish farm industry and control the flow of research and data concerning it. It is highly unconscionable for the DFO to depend on funding from the fish farm industry to conduct research, and for them to regulate this research in order to gain few profits at the expense of the survival of wild salmon."

UBCIC has previously expressed concern over the DFO's biased influence over the fish farming industry, and by [Resolution 2016-41](#) the UBCIC Chiefs-in-Assembly supported Dr. Miller-Saunders' research and other scientific efforts to research the decline of wild salmon stocks, including through Indigenous methodologies.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the UBCIC stated: "UBCIC reaffirms our opposition to the DFO's pro-industry bias and calls for scientific research to be conducted by Indigenous and independent bodies in order to accurately and transparently disclose the risks of open-net fish farms. The federal government can no longer handle the threats to wild salmon through inaction

and misinformation; the very same blatant DFO conflict of interest that is fueling the current violence in Mi'kmaw territory is leading to the complete decimation of wild salmon stocks on BC's west coast. The DFO can no longer afford to uphold their sanitized narrative of fish farm prosperity by controlling what is said about the risks to salmon and how these risks are interpreted.”

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UBCIC is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information please visit www.ubcic.bc.ca