



March 10, 2022

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

I know you share the passionate commitment of all British Columbians to protect and safeguard our wild salmon. Our two governments have been working collaboratively to rebuild wild salmon stocks while supporting the economic interests of communities and First Nations with significant interest in salmon farming.

I am writing to you regarding the Honourable Joyce Murray's mandate letter commitment to develop a transition plan from open net-pen salmon farming in coastal BC by 2025, as well as upcoming decisions facing her ministry on the renewal of licenses and tenures for the majority of salmon farms currently operating in BC.

As you know, we have had some success in BC through our Broughton Archipelago process in tackling the complex issues of reconciliation with First Nations, protecting the health of wild salmon, and meeting the needs of BC communities. I am hoping that in working together we can establish a similar process that can deliver our common goals of wild salmon health, reconciliation, and economic opportunities for BC communities.

Regrettably there is widespread concern in coastal communities that your government is poised to make a decision in coming days that will eliminate many if not all salmon farming licenses.

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If true, this action would eliminate hundreds of jobs at a stroke and undermine the economy of dozens of coastal communities. Worse, it would fly in the face of our governments' commitment to UNDRIP given the stated intention of a number of First Nations to pursue salmon farming. I urge you to provide assurance to the salmon farming sector that an appropriate transition program will be implemented—one that considers their interests and concerns.

As part of BC's commitment to achieving these kinds of solutions, I have appointed Minister Josie Osborne as the Minister for Land, Water and Resource Stewardship and Minister responsible for Fisheries. Minister Osborne will serve as the lead provincial Minister for the Canada Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers and will be the provincial lead for all work with you and your officials. To assist Minister Osborne, I have assigned MLA Fin Donnelly as Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture. I want to thank you for the previous invitation to participate at the Strategic Oversight Committee for the development of Canada's transition plan and Minister Osborne, with assistance of Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly, will lead our provincial team as a fully engaged partner in this work.

In order to ensure our success, I want to emphasize BC's views:

- Any federal licensing decisions should be made in a thoughtful and systematic way that fully engages those First Nations most impacted by the decision, provides the necessary time and clarity for businesses to adjust investment decisions, and does not pre-empt larger policy decisions by Canada, BC and First Nations on the future of the industry.
- Development of a transition plan for open-net pen salmon farming must also include a corresponding transition plan for those First Nations and communities that rely on the economic opportunities provided by the salmon farm industry, as well as a new technology adoption plan that may provide new economic opportunities in BC. The Broughton process not only delivered significant changes in salmon farming policy, but also in how we have approached reconciliation in BC. BC's role in a transition plan will focus on how to acknowledge both those First Nations that object to farming in their territory and also the many First Nations that have developed their own assessment of risk, their own partnerships with industry, and their own vision for the future of their territory and communities.
- BC understands the great importance of wild salmon and is implementing its Wild Salmon Strategy which includes protection, restoration and enhancement of wild salmon populations. Any federal licensing decisions should mitigate potential impacts to wild salmon.

As a follow up to this letter, Minister Osborne will seek to meet with Minister Murray to discuss what a fully engaged role for British Columbia will look like and any necessary adjustments that would be appropriate to your current process. In addition, North Island M.L.A. Michele Babchuk will be organizing a delegation of community leaders to travel to Ottawa to communicate their concerns. I hope your office will facilitate these discussions.

Thank you for your cooperation and I look forward to working more closely on the important fisheries and aquaculture issues in BC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John J. Horgan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Horgan  
Premier

cc: The Honourable Joyce Murray, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

The Honourable Josie Osborne  
Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

Michele Babchuk, MLA  
North Island

Lori Halls, Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

Rebecca Reid, Regional Director General  
Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Pacific Region

Tim Sargent, Deputy Minister  
Department of Fisheries and Oceans