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Dear Minister Murray,

It has come to the attention of the Alouette River Management Society (ARMS) that Premier Horgan is using the UNDRIP language to slow, if not stop, the closing out of commercial fish farm net-pens, citing potential FN's loss of jobs within the north island communities. I would like to express our concerns with this and ask that you do not bow to pressure to slow the proposed transition away from commercial fish farm net-pens.

If one looks close enough, there is clear evidence that the collapse of the wild salmon on this coast by sea lice and now mouth rot in wild salmon from these offshore owned commercial net nets has, by far, been the greatest loss of jobs overall in this region. And this will continue as long as the commercial fish farms are licenced to operate.

Clearly the science is in on the harm to wild salmon caused by these offshore, open net pens, which industry and government cannot hide from. And so, we find it shocking that the provincial government is now using First Nation jobs as the rationale for continuing the assault on this species. Especially when there are so many economic avenues for job creation that do not involve the eradication of a species that is so intrinsic to First Nation's culture. ARMS believe the provincial and federal government have an obligation to be more progressive in the creation of such jobs, as opposed to continuing to prop up a commercial industry that has caused so much damage.

For instance, if these companies wish to stay on our coast, challenge them during the 3-year transition period away from these net pens, to provide employment within the construction of "on-shore net-pens." If they genuinely care about First Nations, they will expedite this and ensure both jobs and the fish that will support them remain for generations to come. There must also be other economic plans for First Nations that the province and federal government should have been prepared to support, knowing that this transition had been proposed—please do not have citizens understand that no thought has been given to this. Because anyone who follows this issue realizes our wild salmon stocks are crashing, and another six years of net-pen impacts may set the recovery of the wild stocks back 20 –30 years, so poor planning on the part of the government is not an excuse.

When Sir David Attenborough was asked which natural phenomenon was the most spectacular of all of hundreds of amazing things he had seen while making his ground-breaking TV series *Life on Earth*, he selected the West Coast salmon run as his choice.

Do you, as our elected representatives, want to be the ones who are held responsible for its decline, or even worse, its extinction?

Minister Murray, we support your 3-year timeline of open-net fish farms transitioning from BC waters to land. The time is well passed for delaying this process as increased decline or extinction of our wild salmon would be the inevitable outcome of extending open net fish farms. Let the provincial government know that you will remain focussed on the promised 3-year closing target and encourage them to join you in working with First Nations to create the replacement jobs that will ensure we do not eliminate this species from our coastal waters.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Stewart', written on a light blue background.

Ken Stewart
President of ARMS