

A Declaration in Defence of Our Wild Salmon

(working title; subject to change)

Our wild salmon are a public treasure.

Wild Pacific salmon are elemental to who we are as First Nations and British Columbians. They have nourished the communities, economies, and cultures of this place for thousands of years. Salmon feed our wildlife and fertilize our forests, provide food security in an uncertain world, support thousands of jobs, bring us together around fishing and feasts, and teach us about the cycle of life and our connection to the natural world.

Our wild salmon face a challenging future, yet their stewardship is a sacred trust, and we will not let them slip away.

Fish farms spread pollution and disease.

Our political leaders have allowed salmon farming companies to place millions of Atlantic salmon in open net-pens on the coastal migration routes of our wild Pacific salmon. The science is clear: these farms host parasites and viruses, amplify these harmful contagions and spread them to our wild fish, compounding the other threats our salmon face. Net-pens send plumes of waste, antibiotics, pathogens, and anti-lice neurotoxins into our coastal waters. These farms, their foreign salmon, and their contaminants have no place on our coast.

We stand for wild salmon. Do you stand with us?

Wild salmon are resilient. They can survive the many other perils they face if we give them a fighting chance. Canada has an opportunity to be a world leader in wild fish restoration, truly sustainable aquaculture, and First Nations reconciliation. We therefore call on the Governments of British Columbia and Canada to defend and restore wild Pacific salmon by taking the following actions without delay:

- Where First Nations do not consent to the presence of open net-pen salmon farms, honour your commitments to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* by taking immediate action to remove existing farms.

- Expand the current moratorium on new open net-pen salmon farms on BC's north coast to cover all BC coastal waters.
- Freeze production levels at all remaining open net-pens, and do not renew their licenses or tenures when they expire, unless the science shows earlier removal is necessary.
- Assess the status of all BC wild salmon populations and their habitats, and implement rebuilding plans for at-risk stocks, as prescribed under *Canada's Policy for the Conservation of Wild Pacific Salmon*.

We stand united in the defence of our natural wealth. Our elected leaders must now take decisive action, so that our children's children can grow old watching wild salmon return to our shores.

Signed,

BACKGROUNDER TO FOLLOW

The backgrounder will provide additional context, explanation, and substantiation of points made in the declaration, including reference to closed containment aquaculture as part of the solution, additional context regarding the phrase "our political leaders have allowed..." and other points that are important to address.