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July 19, 2019

File Number: 5020-30 Fisheries-Herring

via e-mail to:

BOKEĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation
Cowichan Tribes
Halalt First Nation
Homalco First Nation
Klahoose First Nation
K'ómoks First Nation
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lekwungen (Songhees) Nation
Lyackson First Nation
MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nation
Penelakut Tribe
Qualicum First Nation
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation
shíshálh First Nation

Snuneymuxw First Nation
Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation
Snaw-naw-as (Nanose) First Nation
SʔÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nation
Stz'uminus First Nation
SXIMEŁEŁ (Esquimalt) Nation
Tla'amin (Sliammon) Nation
Tsawwassen First Nation
Tsleil-Waututh Nation
T'Sou-ke Nation
Wei Wai Kum (Campbell River) First Nation
We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation
WJOLEŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation
WSIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm Musqueam

Dear Chief and Council/Hegus and Legislators/Respected Leaders:

Re: Moratorium on the Pacific Herring Fishery in the Salish Sea

On behalf of Islands Trust Council, I am writing to you to request your support in signing a letter that the Islands Trust has drafted (attachment 1) requesting to place a moratorium on the Pacific herring fishery in the Salish Sea. The proposed moratorium would last until an ecosystem-based management plan is in place that considers the current and future effects of climate change and the potential impact of the fishery on predator species; in particular, Chinook salmon, and Southern Resident killer whales. We are asking for your support because we believe that if we stand together, we can affect change in the management of this critical forage fish.

Islands Trust Council on March 14, 2019, passed a resolution on the Pacific herring fishery stating:

That Trust Council write a letter to Minister Wilkinson, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, asking for a moratorium on the herring fishery in the Salish Sea until an ecosystem based management plan is in place that considers the current and future effects of climate change and the potential impacts on predator species, in particular, Chinook Salmon and Southern Resident killer whales; and that Bowen Island Municipality and First Nations in the Trust Area be invited to participate as signatories to this letter.

We are concerned with Pacific herring management issues because Pacific herring are foundational to the food web of the Salish Sea. Pacific herring play a critical role in the functioning of regions ecosystems. Pacific herring are the dominant forage fish in the Salish Sea and a vital food source for species of seabirds, and for many species of fish; including Chinook salmon, a critical food source of the Southern Resident killer whales.

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As well, Pacific herring are a fundamental part of the marine food web for Coast Salish Peoples who have resided within this landscape since time immemorial. This forage fish forms one of the foundational species for language, cultural, and spiritual understanding for Coast Salish Peoples, and in turn for all British Columbians and Canadians.

We are concerned that the annual removal of 20% of the Pacific herring population may not support the needs of predator species, especially as populations recover. We note that the mandate letter of the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard includes the direction to “use scientific evidence, traditional Indigenous knowledge, and the precautionary principle, and take into account climate change, when making decisions affecting fish stocks and ecosystem management”. We question whether there is sufficient scientific evidence available on the population, habitat, and ecosystem, and the fishery dynamics of the Pacific herring to support current management decisions. We are not aware of information being available about appropriate conservation limits for Pacific herring based on ecosystem considerations in the context and cumulative effects of climate change.

The health of the Salish Sea and its complex food webs are too crucial to risk. That is why we want to collaborate with all levels of government, First Nations and local governments, as well as federal and provincial agencies to protect the Pacific herring from potentially devastating impacts of the fishing industry. We ask for your support in enacting initiatives and policies that would put this moratorium in place until these management plans are established, and methods of determining herring health and sustainability as a keystone species is determined.

If you would like to add your voice as signatories to the attached draft letter please contact myself or Lisa Wilcox, Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor at lwilcox@islandstrust.bc.ca, or if you would like to see changes to the draft letter please don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working together on these important critical issues with you now and into the future.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Luckham

Chair, Islands Trust Council

pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca

cc: Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group
Laich-kwil-tach Treaty Society
Nanwakolas Council
Naut'sa mawt Tribal
Te'mexw Treaty Association
Bowen Island Municipal Council
Islands Trust Council
Islands Trust website
Islands Trust Area MPs

First Nations Leadership Council

- BC Assembly of First Nations
- First Nations Summit
- Union of BC Indian Chiefs

Attachments:

1. Draft letter to The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson Re: Moratorium on the Herring Fishery in the Salish Sea



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XX XXXX, 2019

File Number: 5020-30 Fisheries-Herring

DRAFT for review and comment

via e-mail: jonathan.wilkinson@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Wilkinson:

Re: Moratorium on the Herring Fishery in the Salish Sea

We are writing to request that you place a moratorium on the herring fishery in the Salish Sea until an ecosystem-based management plan is in place that considers the current and future effects of climate change and the potential impacts of the fishery on predator species, in particular, Chinook Salmon and Southern Resident killer whales. We are asking for this preventative action to ensure we are being precautionary in our management of herring, a keystone species in the Salish Sea.

We are concerned with herring management issues because Pacific herring are foundational to the food web of the Salish Sea. Herring play a critical role in the functioning of the ecosystem. Pacific herring are the dominant forage fish in the Salish Sea and a vital food source for species of seabirds, and for many species of fish; including Chinook salmon, which in turn, is the main food source of the Southern Resident orcas. As well, herring are a fundamental part of the marine food web for Coast Salish peoples who have resided within this landscape since time immemorial.

We are concerned that the annual removal of 20% of the herring population may not support the needs of predator species, especially as populations struggle to recover. We note that your mandate letter includes the direction to "use scientific evidence, traditional Indigenous knowledge, and the precautionary principle, and take into account climate change, when making decisions affecting fish stocks and ecosystem management". We question whether there is sufficient scientific evidence available on the population, habitat, and ecosystem, and the fishery dynamics of the BC Pacific Herring to support current management decisions. We are not aware of information being available about appropriate conservation limits for Pacific Herring based on ecosystem considerations in the context and cumulative effects of climate change.

We ask for your leadership to protect one of the foundational species – the BC Pacific herring - for language, cultural, and spiritual understanding of this area of the Salish Sea for First Nations, and conversely for all British Columbians and Canadians. A moratorium is needed until ecosystem based management plans are developed for the herring fishery that consider community and the pivotal role this species plays in the vitality and health of this region. The health of the Salish Sea and its complex food webs are too crucial to risk. Collaboration with all levels of government from First Nations, local government, federal and provincial agencies to protect the herring from fisheries impacts is vital in this time of climate change. We ask for your support in enacting initiatives and policies that would put this moratorium in place until these management plans and herring health and sustainability as a keystone species is determined.

Preserving *island* communities, culture and environment

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis

Attachment 1.

Commented [CF1]: The letterhead will reflect the logos of any First Nation signatories.

Commented [CF2]: Along with any other requested edits, this introductory sentence may clarify the signatories.

.../2

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
XXXX XX, 2019
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Thank you for considering this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Commented [CF3]: The signature block will contain the signatures of all signatories

Peter Luckham
Chair, Islands Trust Council
pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca

ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES HERE

cc: Islands Trust Area MPs
BOKEĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation
Cowichan Tribes
Halalt First Nation
Homalco First Nation
Klahoose First Nation
K'ómoks First Nation
Lake Cowichan First Nation
Lekwungen (Songhees) Nation
Lyackson First Nation
MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nation
Penelakut Tribe
Qualicum First Nation
Scia'new (Beecher Bay) First Nation
SEMYOME (Semiahmoo) First Nation
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T'Sou-ke Nation
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We Wai Kai (Cape Mudge) First Nation
WJOLELP (Tsartlip) First Nation
WŚIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation
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