



## FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL

of British Columbia

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### FNFC Congratulates Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and New Federal Cabinet Ministers

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The First Nations Fisheries Council of British Columbia (FNFC) extends its sincere congratulations to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and to the newly appointed Cabinet Ministers who were sworn in yesterday at Rideau Hall. In particular we welcome the announcement of two indigenous Ministers, Justice Minister and Attorney General of Canada Pugsas, Jody Wilson-Raybould of Vancouver-Granville, and Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard Hunter Tootoo of Nunavut.

“First Nations have always honoured, protected and relied upon aquatic resources, and have managed them according to our traditional laws and governance structures” said FNFC Chair Ken Malloway. “Our economies have always been based on fisheries, as well as many of our ceremonies and cultural practices. Fishing and its related activities bring us together as communities, and nourish not only our bodies but also our spirits and our connections to each other. We are encouraged by the appointment of an Inuk Fisheries Minister, who will understand this fundamental importance of fisheries to our First Nations communities, and the need to advance Aboriginal and Treaty Rights to access and manage our aquatic resources.”

Commitments made by the Liberal Party of Canada during the campaign included the return to nation-to-nation relationships, implementation of the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the principle of free, prior and informed consent on projects impacting First Nations’ lands and waters. Prime Minister Trudeau has also committed to reviewing legislation passed under the previous government without consultation with First Nations, including omnibus bills C-38 and C-45 (2012), which gutted most of Canada’s long-standing laws protecting fish, habitat, ecosystems and our natural environment. The FNFC looks forward to working closely with incoming Fisheries Minister Tootoo and the new federal government toward the restoration of a sound environmental assessment process, and the recognition of First Nations’ priorities of conservation and fisheries protection in management. We also call upon the government to fully implement the 75 recommendations resulting from the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River, which were largely ignored by government following the release of the report in 2012.

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A UNITED VOICE FOR FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES



“Over the past decade we’ve seen unprecedented pressures on fish stocks and habitats, including competing fishing interests, climate change, disease and pathogens, and cumulative impacts from industrial development and extractive resource activities” said FNFC Executive Director Jordan Point. “Now more than ever we must work together to protect our lands and waters, and ensure that First Nations’ inherent rights to access and manage our resources are respected. The FNFC looks forward to working with not only the newly named department of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard, but also other federal departments whose mandates intersect with fisheries and the advancement of Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights.”

Some of these departments and their newly appointed Ministers include Indigenous and Northern Affairs (Carolyn Bennett), Environment and Climate Change (Catherine McKenna), Natural Resources (Jim Carr), and Science (Kirsty Duncan).

The FNFC is hopeful that this new team of Cabinet Ministers will work with us to advance the rights and interests of First Nations in the Pacific fishery, and support our work to protect our land, waters and resources as our ancestors have before us, and to pass on our traditional values and practices to future generations.

**For more information, contact FNFC Communications Coordinator Aimee Arsenault  
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*The First Nations Fisheries Council of British Columbia was established in 2007 to implement the First Nations Fisheries Action Plan, an agenda for action in the Pacific fishery for BC First Nations. The Action Plan’s vision includes all First Nations in BC working together to address issues of shared concern in the fishery, and to enhance the well-being of communities. The plan calls for maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems and species and restoring them as necessary while sharing management responsibility based on ownership of territories and the inherent Rights of First Nations. The Council works with governments and stakeholders to ensure recognition and respect of First Nations’ Title and Rights and to improve the conservation and management of the resource. The Council is comprised of 14 First Nations delegates appointed from the diverse geographic regions of the province. For more information, please visit our website at [www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca](http://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca).*

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