



FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Nations Fisheries Council Eagerly Awaits Release of Commissioner Cohen's Report and Recommendations

The First Nations Fisheries Council is eagerly awaiting the release of Commissioner Cohen's Final Report into the decline of sockeye salmon in the Fraser River, and his recommendations on how to improve the future sustainability of sockeye salmon and the fishery.

The First Nations Fisheries Council anticipates that Commissioner Cohen's recommendations may include suggested changes to the policies, practices and procedures the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) currently uses for the management of the Fraser River sockeye salmon fishery.

Jordan Point, Executive Director of the First Nations Fisheries Council, is hopeful that recommendations will reinforce the important role that all BC First Nations have in stewardship and co-managing Fraser fisheries.

"Throughout the hearings, it was apparent that along the migratory route of Fraser salmon there was great capacity among First Nations to play a greater role in managing fisheries. Even now, more efficient processes are being established by First Nations to collectively engage in the integrated management process, and advance their respective interests in regard to fishery planning. There is still a lot of ground to make up, but progress is being made. We hope that Justice Cohen will make recommendations to capitalize on the valuable resource at the local and watershed level."

The First Nations Fisheries Council participated in the Cohen Commission of Inquiry as part of the First Nations Coalition (FNC), a group that also included the Fraser River Aboriginal Fisheries Secretariat, the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance, and a number of First Nations

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communities, tribal councils and regional organizations.

The First Nations Fisheries Council sought standing to participate in the Inquiry because of the importance of sockeye salmon to First Nations across the province. First Nations have, since time immemorial, extensively used and occupied the lands and waters along the migratory route of Fraser sockeye salmon, and have been stewards of the resource.

The FNC actively participated in 125 days of hearings, during which the Commission heard from over 175 witnesses on over 25 topics ranging from habitat management to cumulative impacts.

The FNC made oral and written submissions to the Commission. In these submissions, the FNC reviewed the evidence in detail and noted over 100 recommendations needed to improve the sustainability of Fraser River sockeye and the fishery.

The First Nations Fisheries Council urges DFO to meaningfully consider Commissioner Cohen's recommendations and to consult with First Nations on their implementation in order to improve the sustainability of Fraser River sockeye salmon.

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