
STATEMENT

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Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

Minister's and parliamentary secretary's statement on federal decision about salmon farms

VICTORIA – Josie Osborne, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship and Minister Responsible for Fisheries, and Fin Donnelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, have released the following statement in response to Fisheries and Oceans Canada's decision today on salmon-farm licensing in British Columbia.

“Wild salmon are critically important to the social, economic and cultural fabric of this province. B.C. shares Canada's commitment to restoring these iconic populations and the habitats they depend on, and we respect the federal government's authority under the federal Fisheries Act to make decisions on aquaculture licensing.

“We are committed to working with the federal government on an open-net salmon farm transition process that balances the protection of wild salmon, the environment and the economy, and meets our government's commitment to reconciliation with First Nations. Our government has been exceedingly clear about the need for a comprehensive federal support plan for First Nations and communities that rely on salmon aquaculture for their livelihoods, as well as for exploring new technology and economic opportunities for the industry in these regions.

“As Premier John Horgan stated in his letter to Prime Minister Trudeau last March, we know our federal partners share the passionate commitment of all British Columbians to protect wild salmon. We have been working collaboratively to restore and revitalize wild salmon habitat and populations, including through our joint BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund. To date, we've invested \$142.8 million in nearly 100 projects that address broad issues impacting wild salmon. And we are committed to doubling this funding to ensure the sustainability of wild salmon and the habitats they depend on.

“We are also partnering with First Nations on new strategies to steward wild salmon and the marine and inland ecosystems they rely on, including a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund, B.C.'s first-ever Coastal Marine Strategy, and continued progress on a Wild Salmon Strategy. Each of these is vital in its own right, but together, they amount to a powerhouse of benefit for the future of an abundant, sustainable wild salmon ecosystem.

“Our government will continue working with Canada, First Nations, and our partners and stakeholders to protect and restore wild salmon populations as committed to in the Declaration Act Action Plan, while advocating for and supporting a comprehensive federal support plan for those affected by the upcoming transition.”

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