

LOWER FRASER FISHERIES ALLIANCE

Statement of Solidarity

September 20, 2010 at Shxw̓ha:y Village

First Nations in British Columbia have constitutionally protected title and rights that have been affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada and by international conventions and local and international treaties. These rights include the right to be self-determining and to manage our lands, waters, and resources according to our sovereign, inherent and collective responsibilities, laws and jurisdictions for the benefit of future generations and the protection of indigenous species.

First Nations have the right to protect, manage and derive social, cultural and economic benefits from the wealth of our lands, waters and resources. First Nations acknowledge the interdependence we have with one another and respectfully honor our commitment to work with each other to maintain and develop strategies and cooperative relationships built upon respect, transparency, openness, accountability and mutual trust. We recognize that we have the right to determine our level of involvement and perspectives on fisheries and aquaculture based on each of our community's needs, aspirations and priorities within our own territories.

On September 20, 2010 a meeting was convened to discuss the development of a Statement of Solidarity among the First Nations. The Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance affirms the following principle statements for fisheries and aquaculture as endorsed by First Nations leaders and participants:

- A. That we recognize and respect each other's autonomy and support each other in exercising our respective title, rights and jurisdiction. This recognition and respect applies to each First Nation in terms of their involvement and stance on fisheries and aquaculture opportunity and issues.
- B. On a Nation-to-Nation basis, First Nations need to be engaged from the most initial discussions when fisheries and aquaculture are being considered within and outside of our territories. Holding governments to their fiduciary obligations, we require involvement with planning, management and decision-making processes for all fisheries and aquaculture related matters. This involvement is required in order to protect environmentally, socially, and culturally significant areas, to safeguard our traditional food sources, to secure the long-term health of wild salmon, and to protect our right to manage our territories.
- C. As Indigenous Nations of our respective territories, we require input into the day-to-day management of fisheries and aquaculture, as these decisions directly or indirectly impact our communities, our title and rights, as well as our ways of life. We will engage with DFO to incorporate a holistic or area management approach with respect to fisheries and aquaculture matters that are responsive to First Nations in a meaningful management role.

- D. As Indigenous Nations of our respective territories, we require engagement in the science that guides decision making on the management and regulation of fisheries and aquaculture. We need to be engaged and benefit from the sharing of scientific information, the development and acceptance of new scientific tools, and the collection and analysis of data. We expect decisions to be made based on the best scientific information and local First Nation traditional knowledge available.
- E. As the inherent owners of our respective territories, we recognize the need to be involved in the monitoring and compliance of this dynamic industry to ensure that our title and rights are respected, our resources are safeguarded for future generations, and our indigenous species protected from unjustified harm or possible extinction.
- F. We commit to working in accordance with the messages outlined in this Statement of Solidarity to ensure that any actions taken in respect of fisheries and aquaculture are respectful of our rights, title, lands, waters and resources, are consistent with our common cultural belief systems, and improve our overall quality of life.

The Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance has been empowered by Signatory First Nations to the DFO AAROM Program to establish a First Nation to First Nation working relationship and build capacity. The organization will work toward collaborative management under a Tier 2 and 3 processes in the future and if successful will help facilitate discussions with local, federal and provincial governments regarding the recognition of First Nations inherent rights with respect to the management of fisheries and aquaculture.