



*Rachel Blaney*

Member of Parliament  
North Island-Powell River

Ottawa ON  
March 3, 2020

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard  
Via Email

**RE: Chinook Fishery Restrictions**

Dear Minister,

I was pleased to see that as requested in my Chinook Public Fishery Restrictions report, the letter advising stakeholders of chinook fishery restrictions this year was earlier than last. This will give people in the affected industries in my riding some time to plan ahead. However, we know that restrictions on fishing and retention are not enough to save Pacific wild salmon. We only have to look to the moratorium on wild Atlantic salmon in place since 2000 to know that these measures alone do not guarantee the recovery of these vital species.

Across Vancouver Island and the West Coast, communities are only just now recovering from an eight-month labour dispute in the forestry industry and Pacific wild salmon are facing pressures from all sides. We need a comprehensive plan to ensure their population recovery so they can provide for healthy oceans and prosperous coastal communities.

As also stated in the report, we need to see adipose fin-clipping for existing hatchery chinook and the implementation of a mark-selective fishery once these fish reach the minimum legal size for retention. The costs associated are minimal compared to the economic impact that guides, lodges, and tackle shops have in my riding. In order to have the hatcheries ready for marking in the next salmon cycle, they need a decision by mid-April of this year. Reviewing this over the long-term with the Southern BC Chinook Committee leaves coastal communities reliant of chinook fishing for their economies waiting too long for action. I recommend this be made the immediate priority in your ministry.

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The British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund is a good model of how the Federal and BC governments can work together to support wild salmon, but far more needs to be done. The funding earmarked for these five years needs to be made available immediately and added to so that spawning streams, kelp forests and eelgrass beds where chinook salmon spend their early lives can be revitalized as soon as possible. Again, pushing this to the long-term with the Southern BC Chinook Committee is a dangerous approach. We've known for years that Pacific salmon are in decline and we need to take immediate action.

And I must admit my concern that the department will refuse to hear from any stakeholders not already part of the advisory boards. Do people in my riding who depend on these fisheries not have a right to be heard? I recommend this be amended and that you take the time to visit affected communities in my riding and hear directly from them.

It will be several years before the impact of these measures to support wild salmon and coastal communities will be felt. That is exactly why we need to see action now. I hope today's announcement is just the first in a series meant to revitalize wild salmon and support coastal communities.

My team and all New Democrats are always available should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rachel Blaney, MP  
North Island-Powell River

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