



FEB 26 2021

Ms. Rachel Blaney, M.P.  
North Island–Powell River  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Blaney:

Thank you for your correspondence of December 21, 2020, regarding the recent announcement about the transition of marine net-pen farms in the Discovery Islands.

Aquaculture plays an important role in Canada's economy and the Government is committed to managing it responsibly and sustainably. There are many factors that must be taken into consideration, including consultations with First Nations, to ensure it is appropriate for the community and the area.

On December 17, 2020, I announced my intention to phase out existing salmon farming facilities in the Discovery Islands. This decision was not made lightly and I assure you that the socio-economic impacts were considered throughout the decision-making process.

In line with this announcement, all farms must be free of fish by June 30, 2022, and no new fish of any size can be introduced into Discovery Islands facilities during this time. Fish already being raised at these sites can remain until they are ready for harvest. This aligns with the Province of British Columbia's (BC) commitment that, effective June 2022, *Land Act* tenures will only be granted to operators who have negotiated agreements with First Nations in whose territory they propose to operate.

Marine finfish aquaculture facilities in the Discovery Islands are located on the traditional territory of the Homalco, Klahoose, K'ómoks, Kwiakah, Tla'amin, We Wai Kai, and Wei Wai Kum First Nations. Consultations with these First Nations provided important guidance and informed this decision. Further information can be found in the [news release](#) and [backgrounder](#) for this announcement.

I recognize that this decision is causing uncertainty and stress for families and communities in the region, for whom aquaculture is a critical source of income and economic development.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) will also work through an implementation plan with industry to ensure an orderly approach to transition and to ensure that information is shared with First Nations in the Discovery Islands.

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The Government is also committed to developing a plan to transition marine net-pens in coastal BC waters, as specified in my December 2019 mandate letter. Mr. Terry Beech, my Parliamentary Secretary, will be holding virtual roundtable engagement sessions with First Nations in BC, the aquaculture industry, environmental stakeholders, and other interested parties to share their diverse perspectives on this important initiative. These sessions are being complemented by an opportunity to engage through online submissions, to allow those who cannot participate in the virtual sessions to have their opinions heard. Members of the public are invited to share their views with the Government by responding online to key questions.

The results of Mr. Beech's engagements will be presented to me in an interim report this coming spring.

Canada can be a global leader in sustainable aquaculture, when working collaboratively with Indigenous peoples, industry, local communities, and governments. The Government will continue to work with its partners on a responsible transition of open net-pen salmon farming in coastal BC waters. Engagement with these groups is critical to ensuring the transition plan is workable, economically feasible, takes into account social impacts, and explores area-based management of aquaculture.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bernadette Jordan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

c.c.: Mr. Terry Beech, M.P.  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the  
Canadian Coast Guard  
Burnaby North–Seymour