



May 22, 2024

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C. M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office the Prime Minister
80 Wellington St
K1A 0A2

Re: Urgent Appeal for Renewal of Salmon Farming Licenses and Support for Kitsoo Xai'xais Innovation Plan

Dear Prime Minister

On behalf of the Kitsoo Xai'xais Nation, I am writing to you on an urgent basis as your government is nearing final decisions on the renewal of salmon farming licences in British Columbia and the publication of a transition plan that will significantly impact the future well-being of our Nation and our People.

Since 2019, the Kitsoo Xai'xais Nation has been updating its sustainable development model for our local finfish aquaculture sector. This is in response to a new Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) policy outlining a goal to reduce interactions between wild and farmed salmon by transitioning the industry away from open-net pen fish farms. As you can imagine, this period has been marked by significant uncertainty and concern for communities dependent on this industry.

While the DFO has been revising its policies to better include Indigenous interests and explain its decisions, there is a consensus among stakeholders and First Nations on the need for new incentives to drive technology and innovation to enhance sustainability and increase public support. To ensure innovative practices and progressive development within our aquaculture industry, our Nation has developed our own initiatives: the Kitsoo Model and the Kitsoo Xai'xais Finfish Aquaculture Innovation Plan.

The Kitsoo Model, instrumental in fostering a robust and sustainable economy over the past three decades, serves as the foundation for this collaboration. This pioneering framework for sustainable finfish aquaculture integrates stewardship of natural resources with community-led economic development. Grounded in co-governance and cultural values, it ensures environmental health and economic vitality through innovative and adaptive management practices.



The Innovation Plan, expanding and modernizing the framework of the Kitasoo Model, is a sustainable development model for our local finfish aquaculture sector. Developed using over 20 years of scientific research and centuries of traditional knowledge, this plan represents our commitment to sustainability and community well-being. This plan aims to enhance technology adoption and innovation in the local industry, establish the KX Aquaculture Management Committee for environmental oversight, and develop metrics that reflect our goals and public concerns. The Innovation Plan not only addresses political and public concerns regarding the salmon farming industry but also sets a foundation for a sustainable and prosperous future in finfish aquaculture, reinforcing our ability to balance environmental stewardship, economic development, and community resilience.

We, the Kitasoo Xai'xais, have continuously asserted our Rights and Title authority in our traditional territory and have invited the DFO to engage in collaborative efforts to gain insights into our forward-thinking approach to industry management. At times, this dialogue with the DFO and the Government of Canada has been frustrating and one-sided. Today, we are no closer to understanding the federal government's direction in finalizing a "responsible transition plan."

However, we are certain that failure to renew current salmon farming licences will put our Nation at risk, and will result in annual economic losses approximated at \$2.82 million in economic output, \$2.8 million in employment income, and 60 jobs within the Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation.

Therefore, I am calling on you and your government to act urgently. With respect to our Rights and Title authority to decide the future of salmon farming in our traditional territory, we are asking that you renew all salmon farming licences in British Columbia for a minimum of six years.

Thank you for your attention and consideration regarding this critical matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isaiah Robinson".

Isaiah Robinson

Deputy Chief Councillor
Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation