

Intertribal Treaty Organization

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Press Release

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During the March 9-10, 2010 inaugural AGA of the Intertribal Treaty Organization (ITO) held in Prince George, attending Chiefs voted unanimously to support Indigenous Nations of the Broughton Archipelago and Georgia Straits for the immediate removal of fish farms from their territories to support in the survival of Fraser River bound fish stocks.

The member Chiefs of the ITO expressed their concern and support to urge the open net cage practices of the aquaculture industry to move toward closed containment. As the coming season and runs of Chums and Pinks draws near the Chiefs call for alternative aquaculture procedures recognizing the economic gains ventured by some coastal Nations. The concern is for the smolts that will arrive soon; Sockeye, Coho and Chinook. There is an increased mortality rate as they pass through the fish farm congested and bio-chemically hazardous inside passage which was cited as the primary cause of reduced returning stocks.

Lawrence Williams of the Splatshin, Secwepemc Nation, recognized the need for all to work together on this issue, "In our watershed, we are in support of that. If there could be a legal petition I could take it to the non-Native communities in our area, as well we could send that letter in to parliament supporting this, and if there could be a legal writing then I could send this through our watershed table area to the neighboring communities who could support us as well. Even though they are not First Nations they also share this responsibility for their future generations."

As the ITO gets established and ready for the upcoming fisheries it prepares for just such issues that require urgent action and coordination needed to support enhanced salmon stocks on the Fraser.

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