

Minister of
Fisheries and Oceans



Ministre des
Pêches et des Océans

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0E6

October 29, 2020

Mr. Rod Clapton
President
BC Federation of Drift Fishers
< rclapton@shaw.ca >

Dear Mr. Clapton:

Thank you for your correspondence of April 11, 2020, regarding at-risk Chinook salmon stocks in British Columbia (BC). I regret the delay in responding.

Conservation is the Department's first priority in the management of the salmon fishery. As Ms. Rebecca Reid, Regional Director General, Pacific Region noted in her August 19, 2020, response, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has released the 2020 Fisheries Management Measures to Protect Fraser River Chinook. These measures were developed following consultation with Indigenous communities, recreational and commercial fishing organizations, and environmental organizations. Addressing the challenges faced by Fraser River Chinook requires significant measures for all fisheries in areas where these stocks may be encountered, and I assure you that the enforcement of these measures is important to DFO.

Hatchery enhancement is another key tool in supporting vulnerable salmon populations and providing harvest opportunities. DFO's BC interior hatchery facilities are currently operating at full capacity, delivering a suite of conservation and stock assessment related enhancement projects. Additional work is underway to review other Fraser River hatchery facility options, including past, present, and potential future facilities, such as the Willow Creek facility you mention in your letter.

The Big Bar landslide response team has also performed a comprehensive scan across watersheds, salmon populations, and hatchery facilities to develop and implement an emergency enhancement strategy. Presently, Chinook from eight separate upper Fraser early run populations have been collected from the slide site. DFO and First Nation crews are commencing additional natal stream brood collection as part of this effort.

In regard to your request for an expansion to hatchery-origin marked Chinook (also known as mark selective fisheries, or MSF), I am pleased to share that DFO is reviewing information to support decision-making on the potential expansion of MSF. While MSF opportunities could offer potential benefits for fisheries, they must be considered as part of a longer-term, integrated approach for Pacific salmon management. They must also be balanced with a full understanding of the issues and potential resource requirements needed to mitigate the short- and long-term concerns. I encourage you to visit the [hatchery marking section of our frequently asked questions regarding Chinook](#) webpage to learn more.

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With respect to your concerns about the impact of seals and sea lions (pinnipeds) on Chinook salmon, as well as other Pacific salmon populations, DFO views the management of pinnipeds from an ecosystem perspective and considers their overall role in the environment. Using a science-based approach, the Department continues to investigate and better understand pinniped-salmon interactions. Further information on this is available on the frequently asked questions link above.

Regarding the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF), this will provide up to \$142.85 million in new investments over five years, supporting protection and restoration activities for priority wild fish stocks—including salmon—as well as projects that will help position the BC fish and seafood sector for long-term environmental and economic sustainability. While some projects are focused on near-term results, many of the projects selected for funding in 2019 include significant research, planning, and prioritization components, which will result in meaningful, long-lasting benefits for salmon stocks and fisheries.

Details on funded projects, such as those focused on improving community-based hatcheries, are available on the BCSRIF website. One such project will support upgrades to the Sooke River Jack Brooks hatchery and interpretive centre to meet green building codes, upgrade effluent treatments, and provide the potential for stock assessment capability. The planning process and upgrades are intended to provide a template to support similar upgrades and contribute to the overall effectiveness of community-run hatcheries. Additional support for community hatcheries has been identified as a joint federal/provincial priority for the Fund in 2020, and I understand that many organizations have expressed their intentions to pursue funding through the application intake process this summer.

Thank you again for providing me with your thoughts on this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

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