

When Rights Collide with Wrongs – Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw ‘Cleansing our Waters’ in Vancouver

Vancouver, BC, September 3, 2016: On Monday, September 5th at 1 PM, the Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw traditional leaders will arrive to link arms with the Fraser Nations at the Vancouver Art Gallery. On Monday, August 28th, a delegation aboard the Sea Shepherd’s R/V Martin Sheen left Campbell River to travel to Victoria and Vancouver to deliver the message to the governments of British Columbia and Canada to remove fish farms from Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw traditional territories.

The Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw Nations have stated their opposition to the salmon farming industry for 30 years in a clear and consistent manner. Despite this opposition, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the BC salmon farming industry is using our territorial waters to raise Atlantic salmon, without our consent. In a letter to BC Premier Christy Clark and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau:

"We, the Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw view the destruction of wild fish and marine ecosystems by the fish farming industry as part of the long history of genocide forced on our people by the governments of Canada. Salmon are essential to our well-being and the well-being of our world."

"We have lived within these lands for thousands of years. We have never ceded our territories. In asserting our jurisdiction, we demand that the fish farms be removed from our territories immediately. In doing this we are exercising our indigenous authority to protect our lands and waters, thus ensuring the wellbeing of our future generations."

Up to 40% of the young salmon leaving our territory in the spring of 2015 were killed by sea lice from salmon farms¹. In 2015, the Federal Court ruled diseased farm salmon should not be transferred into marine fish farms, because it is a violation of the Fisheries Act, but there is no evidence this has stopped.

On August 15, 2016, with complete support of our nation, three Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw traditional leaders boarded the Cermaq/Mitsubishi salmon farm in the Burdwood Islands and served an eviction notice to all salmon farms in our territory. On August 18, 2016 a cleansing ceremony was a follow-up action as part of the process to remove salmon farms from Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw territory.

"We have heard the words of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, that honouring the rights of First Nations are a "sacred obligation" to the Liberal Government of Canada," "Our people have spoken, we want salmon farms out of our territory."

Hereditary leader and Chief Councillor Willie Moon

"The wild salmon connect all of us, they migrate through all of our territories. We depend on it. So let's link arms and come together. I also ask British Columbians, I know a lot of you don't agree with fish farming - link arms with us!"

Chief Ol' Siwid (Mike Willie)

[1] <http://www.nrcresearchpress.com/doi/abs/10.1139/cjfas-2016-0122#.V7S5da65K7Q>

For more information:

❑ <http://cleansingourwaters.com>

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