

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Democrats call for more support for BC coastal communities

OTTAWA— Today, New Democrats called on the government to support the public fishing and tourism industry that is critical to many coastal communities, and for a comprehensive and science-based plan to protect endangered Fraser River Chinook.

"It's another slap in the face to coastal communities that the minister announced an additional year of restrictions without the urgent investments needed to bring our wild salmon back to abundance and deliver on the emergency package we've been calling for," said NDP Critic for Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Gord Johns. "The failures of this government are having devastating impacts on sport, recreation, commercial, and indigenous fishers on the coast."

The Minister for Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard announced planned regulations for public fishing of Chinook salmon, effectively rolling over last year's retention restrictions for a second year.

"The restrictions last year were devastating to many guides, lodges, and tackle shops up and down the coast," said NDP MP and Whip Rachel Blaney. "Especially in our smaller communities, we need a sustainable salmon fishery to support our economy, our food security, and our way of life. These restrictions alone will not get us there. We need a real plan and investment in habitat restoration now."

In a letter to the Minister, Blaney calls for the establishment of a mark-selective fishery where public fishers would be able to catch and retain hatchery Chinook saying the benefits outweigh the costs. Blaney has also launched a petition to support the mark-selective fishery which is available through her office.

"People in coastal communities in Cowichan-Malahat-Langford rely on tourism to take care of their families and salmon fishing is a big part of that. Unfortunately, the government isn't making meaningful conservation efforts or supporting our communities," said NDP MP Alistair MacGregor. "New Democrats are fighting to ensure that future generations of British Columbians can enjoy the many economic benefits of having these fish off our coasts."

New Democrats are asking that DFO engage in an in-depth, meaningful, community consultation process with outcomes that are based on science and evidence based decision making, and rely on local, and indigenous knowledge.

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To get the petition: rachel.blaney@parl.gc.ca or 250-287-9388.

For more information, please contact:
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