

Supplementary Opinion from the New Democratic Party of Canada

When appearing before this committee as a witness, Fin Donnelly challenged the Members present by saying:

“Members of this committee are well aware of the problems facing west coast salmon, and I bet you could all agree on most of the needed solutions. Do you have the courage to make the tough recommendations needed in your report and, as respective members of Parliament and members of different parties, can you come together to ensure the government implements them?”^[1]

We agreed on most of the recommendations present in this report, and we agree that action must be taken. But we cannot let this report sit on a shelf, as it appears the Cohen Commission and numerous reports by salmon advocates, Indigenous leadership, scientists, biologists, and environmentalists are currently doing. What salmon do not need is further study, we need comprehensive efforts to save wild salmon immediately.

Due to the urgency of needing to present this report before the House of Commons rises, several recommendations were left unsubmitted for consideration. The NDP respectfully calls on the government to act on the following recommendations:

Commercial Fishery

- The remaining Pacific Salmon Treaty Mitigation Funds for chinook catch reduction in Area G should immediately go to the West Coast Aquatic Management Board to support the harvesters and communities directly impacted.

Budget 2021

- That the government have an ongoing commitment of funding and effort to support the wild salmon recovery.
- Use this moment in history as an opportunity to transition away from an extractive economy that is primarily focused on short-term economic benefits and build a restoration economy focussed on the long-term benefits all those who depend on wild Pacific salmon populations and ecosystems

Invasive Species

- That DFO work with scientists and environmentalists to expand the capacity and scope of efforts to mitigate the impacts of European Green Crab on wild salmon, including large-scale trapping efforts and responding to site infestations.

Fisheries Management

- That the government prioritize investment in the recovery of weak salmon populations as this is the best way to unlock potential for access to fishing.
- Establish watershed-based habitat management plans as part of watershed-based salmon sustainability and recover plans. Once plans are established, there must be resources, action and accountability in the delivery of these plans.

- Bring forward a new Habitat Policy with clearly defined goals to guide the authorities in the habitat provisions of the *Fisheries Act*, and establish strategies, actions, and evaluation of results to ensure that the habitat needs for salmon are being managed to support recovery and sustainability
- Ensure that actions taken to restore or rebuild salmon are based on defensible assessments that identify root causes, and consider the interactions of habitats, harvests and hatcheries.
- Increase the Salmon Conservation Stamp to at least \$10 to generate grants for community organizations for restoration, enhancement, monitoring and stewardship to support salmon.
- That the government create a new Pacific Region director-level position in charge of the health of wild salmon that all scientists working on the health of wild salmon report directly to, with funding equivalent to the Aquaculture Management Division of DFO.

Aquaculture

- That the Government of Canada commit to the transition away from open-net pen salmon farms from coastal British Columbia, with the transition beginning by the end of 2025. A plan for the transition of the aquaculture labour force must be developed immediately in partnership with the government of British Columbia and Indigenous Leadership, taking into account the urgent need for federal support of regional economic development opportunities to diversify the economy and support workers within the open-pen net industry to ensure their needs are addressed.

[1] Fin Donnelly, Chair of the Board, Rivershed Society of British Columbia, *Evidence*, 11 August 2020.