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## ***News Release***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 12, 2006**

### **First Nations Leadership Council Appalled with Prime Minister's Comments on the Aboriginal Economic Fishery**

Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, BC – The First Nations Leadership Council unanimously rejected and denounced Prime Minister Stephen Harper's comments made in Vancouver affirming his position that the Aboriginal economic fisheries are "race-based".

"To come into our traditional territories and to openly state his racist assertions is an affront to First Nations in BC and a direct challenge to the courts" declared Chief Judith Sayers, Executive member of the First Nations Summit

Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated "Let us be clear, there are no 'race-based' fisheries – there are Aboriginal rights-based fisheries which are judicially recognized and enshrined in the Constitution. Harper is fishing for votes by once again playing the provocative race card."

"The Harper government should honour court decisions such as Kapp, Sparrow, Gladstone, Delgamuukw, and Marshall," urged Assembly of First Nations BC Regional Chief Shawn Atleo. "The Leadership Council challenges the Prime Minister to meet with the First Nations leaders to discuss his perspective on the state of the Aboriginal fisheries."

In the most recent decision, June 2006, the BC Court of Appeal decided in R v. Kapp that allocations for commercial purposes is not discriminatory and represents a legitimate policy decision well within the authorities in the fisheries legislation. Based on these rulings, First Nation communities have been proactively working with industry, federal government officials to develop solutions on the state of fisheries.

Regional Chief Atleo observed "There is little support from First Nations, industry, sports, and environmental groups for yet another inquiry of the Fraser River fishery. If the Harper government is truly financially accountable, rather than spend millions of dollars on another inquiry, use those funds to sustain the fishery by enhancing fisheries

management, scientific research and recovery efforts of endangered runs such as the Cultus, Early Stuart and Sakinaw Lake sockeye.”

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The First Nations Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the BC Assembly of First Nations. The Council works together to politically represent the interests of First Nations in British Columbia and develop strategies and actions to bring about significant and substantive changes to government policy that will benefit all First Nations in British Columbia.

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