



FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
FEBRUARY 16, 2011**

**An Open Letter from the First Nations Summit to
Hon. Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Hon. John
Duncan Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs**

Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver) — The First Nations Summit today released the attached open letter to Hon. Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Hon. John Duncan Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs calling for an immediate meeting to discuss Canada's mismanagement of the Pacific Halibut fishery.

The First Nations Summit is astounded and dismayed by yesterday's announcement by Minister Shea dividing allocations to the commercial and sports fishing sectors. This decision, together with the rationale, completely defies Supreme Court of Canada decisions respecting First Nations/Aboriginal Fisheries.

The First Nations Summit is seeking an immediate meeting with Minister Shea and Minister Duncan to discuss this important issue in greater detail.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

For Further Information:
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First Nations Summit:
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FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

February 16, 2011

Hon. Gail Shea
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
MINISTER'S OFFICE, CENTENNIAL TOWER
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6

Hon. J. Duncan
Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
EXECUTIVE OFFICES
10 Wellington Street
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H4

Dear Minister Shea and Minister Duncan,

RE: PACIFIC HALIBUT FISHERY

We are absolutely astounded by your February 15, 2011 Pacific halibut fishery announcement dividing allocations to the commercial and sports fishing sectors. This decision, together with the rationale, completely defies Supreme Court of Canada decisions respecting First Nations/Aboriginal Fisheries.

Supreme Court of Canada decisions, beginning with the Sparrow Case, have been unequivocally clear that following only conservation, Aboriginal Fisheries is a priority over commercial & sport fishing interests. This includes all fisheries, not just salmon or halibut. Yet, while First Nations are seeking agreements, through good faith negotiations, your Department is shamelessly dividing the spoils between the commercial and sports fishing interests.

This is a totally unacceptable approach by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as it flies in the face of good faith negotiations.

We urgently request a meeting with you to discuss this important matter in greater detail. Please have your officials contact Colin Braker (cbraker@fns.bc.ca) at our office at 604-926-9903 to confirm an early meeting.

Sincerely,
FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT TASK GROUP

Grand Chief Edward John

Chief Douglas White III Kwulasultun

Dan Smith

C.C. Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs
Jody Wilson-Raybould, Regional Chief, BC Assembly of First Nations
First Nations Fisheries Council