Agreements reached for Indigenous Monitoring and Inspection Plan of Fish Farms in the Broughton Archipelago.

Alert Bay, B.C. – The ‘Namgis, Kwikwasut’inuxw Haxwa’mis, and Mamalilikulla First Nations have reached agreements regarding the implementation of the Broughton First Nations Indigenous Monitoring and Inspection Plan (IMIP) with Cermaq Canada, and Mowi Canada West, with the support of the Province of British Columbia and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The IMIP will establish First Nations oversight of fish farms operating in the Territories of the First Nations during the orderly transition of fish farms in the area over the next four years. The First Nations and the two companies have engaged in significant and meaningful discussions over the past nine months to develop this comprehensive monitoring and oversight program.

Establishing an IMIP was one of many significant recommendations to come out of a ground-breaking government-to-government process undertaken by the First Nations and the Province of B.C. following a letter of understanding (LOU) regarding the future of finfish aquaculture in the Broughton area.

The Indigenous Monitoring and Inspection Plan is being implemented immediately with program activities expanding over the first year as the First Nations build internal capacity. It will see First Nations leading the monitoring of fish health, sea lice, pathogens, disease agents and diseases before and after introduction of fish into the fish farms. It has been agreed smolts positive for piscine reovirus will not be transferred into saltwater and corrective measures include removal of fish from farms if treatment for sea lice is unsuccessful in meeting thresholds. The program will improve public reporting and have compliance and corrective measures if the required standards are not met by fish farm operators.

This agreement reinforces the importance of supporting wild salmon populations while building capacity within the First Nations and working in a transparent manner with industry. The IMIP will provide important First Nations oversight during an orderly transition of 17 fish farm sites between 2019 and 2023. Five farms have already been decommissioned, while others will remain in operations for various terms (two to four years). By the end 2022, 10 farms will have ceased operations. The remaining seven farms will cease operations, unless agreements by First Nations and farm operators, and valid Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) licences are in place by 2023.
The Province of BC and DFO recently announced that the Nations involved in the IMIP will receive over seven million dollars in funding through the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) over the coming years to support the establishment of the program. Both Cermaq and Mowi are also providing funding and in-kind support to the program.

Quotes:

Chief Rick Johnson, Kwikwasut’inuxw Haxwa’mis First Nation.

“The Indigenous Monitoring and Inspection Plan is an important achievement for our Nations, an expression of our Nations’ exercising jurisdiction in our territories and regulating an industry operating in our territorial waters”

Chief Don Svanvik, ‘Namgis First Nations

“The agreements with Cermaq Canada and Mowi Canada West provide the means for our Nations to oversee the operations of the fish farms during the orderly transition period and to develop standards to minimize, mitigate or avoid harm to marine resources, especially wild salmon”

Chief Richard Sumner, Mamalilikulla First Nation

“Stewardship in our territories is a sacred trust and responsibility, a commitment to future generations that we will protect the land, resources and waters in our territories far into the future. The IMIP agreements are important tools that will enhance the ability of our Nations to fulfill this responsibility as well as improve transparency by providing trusted information to our members and the public about the interactions of farm operations and marine resources.”

David Kiemele, Managing Director, Cermaq Canada

“We are incredibly pleased with the outcome of this process and would like to thank the Nations involved for their willingness to work with us and allow us to participate in the development of this precedent setting program and agreement. For Cermaq Canada, this plan is important in terms of reconciliation and reflects Cermaq Canada’s ongoing approach to doing business in First Nation’s territories. Cermaq is committed to move forward, together, in a way that will help to protect and enhance wild salmon populations, with the goal of building capacity, relationships and trust.

Dr. Diane Morrison, Managing Director, Mowi Canada West

“This agreement is so important to the 600 people who work for Mowi and the hundreds of contractors that support our salmon farming operations. I am grateful for the vision and efforts of the First Nations leaders we have deeply engaged with over the past number of months. Mowi believes strongly in equitable and meaningful relationships with First Nations in B.C.”

Amy Jonsson
Cermaq Canada
Amy.jonsson@cermaq.com
250-202-7680

Jeremy Dunn
Mowi Canada West
Jeremy.dunn@mowi.com
604-908-7073

Kelly-Ann Speck
‘Namgis First Nation
kelly.speck@namgis.bc.ca
250-974-7179