



September 30, 2020

The Right Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada

OPEN LETTER FROM WSÁNEĆ LEADERSHIP COUNCIL RE: SUPPORT FOR MI'KMAQ IN FISHERIES DISPUTE

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council—representing the Tsartlip, Tsawout, and Tseycum First Nations—strongly denounces the ongoing attempts by non-indigenous fishermen to intimidate, threaten and prevent Mi'kmaq people from exercising their unextinguished and constitutionally affirmed fishing rights. WSÁNEĆ people also experience the near-constant violation of our right to “fish as formerly” and demand that similar infringements are not ignored by the federal government.

The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council fully supports the Sipekne'katik First Nation's call for DFO Minister Bernadette Jordan, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil, and the RCMP to uphold the rule of law, stop the unlawful hinderance of its members in exercising their fishing rights, and prosecute any illegal protest or criminal behavior by the commercial fishing industry. Government inaction must not enable the infringement of Mi'kmaq rights and further encourage acts of hostility and violence.

The federal government has made clear statements of reconciliation to First Nations across Canada, yet violence against First Nations and the violation of our rights are not condemned. There is little sign of the “deep commitments to relationships with Indigenous peoples based on affirmation of rights, respect cooperation and partnership” that CIRNAC Minister Carolyn Bennett has spoken of. Federal government inaction on these matters greatly frustrates our efforts toward reconciliation.

The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council urges the federal government to abide by its obligations as set by the Supreme Court of Canada and s.35 of the constitution and to live up to its commitments of reconciliation.

HÍSWKE,

Chief Don Tom
Tsartlip First Nation

Chief Tanya Jimmy
Tseycum First Nation

Chief Nicholas Claxton
Tsawout First Nation