



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **T̂silhqot'in Call for Action to Stop the Alaskan District 104 Fishery from Intercepting Critical Salmon Stocks as Pacific Salmon Commission meets**

**Williams Lake, B.C.:** The T̂silhqot'in Nation is calling for the Alaskan District 104 Fishery to be shut down due to conservation concerns and Indigenous priority rights for Salmon in the Fraser River. The District 104 Purse Seine Fishery intercepts salmon stocks returning to their natal streams in Canada, which includes Fraser River salmon stocks that the T̂silhqot'in Nation relies on for food security.

Existing data from Alaska demonstrates that the fishery has significant impacts on Fraser River stocks in years of low returns, with impacts on both First Nations fisheries and conservation. During extreme conservation measures that restrict Canadian and Washington harvest, and can close even Indigenous food fisheries in British Columbia, the Alaskan District 104 Fishery continues to harvest these salmon without limit.

In 2019, the T̂silhqot'in Nation was faced with a surprisingly low return of salmon to the Territory – and while the T̂silhqot'in chose not to fish for their families and communities, the Alaska District 104 Fishery harvested a reported 45,000 Chilko sockeye. The T̂silhqot'in Nation remains concerned that the 2023 Chilko sockeye return may be dangerously low. These sockeye are the offspring from the severely impacted 2019 year and the T̂silhqot'in want these fish protected for both conservation and their priority fishery.

Today, Chief Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chair of the T̂silhqot'in National Government, addressed the Pacific Salmon Commission and called for action on the Alaskan District 104 Fishery as the Pacific Salmon Commission meets this week in Vancouver, B.C. The Pacific Salmon Commission was formed by the governments of Canada and the United States to implement the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The Alaskan Salmon Fishery is currently authorized under the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

### **Quote:**

#### **Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, O.B.C, LL.D. (hon.). Tribal Chair, T̂silhqot'in National Government**

“What we are seeing here is nothing less than economic interests trumping major impacts to the wellbeing of the T̂silhqot'in people. Our salmon fishery is central to our identity and our way of life. Our people rely on the annual migration of salmon to feed our families throughout the year. In 2019, for the first time in my lifetime, the T̂silhqot'in Nation closed our sockeye fishery for conservation. With low ocean returns, and the threat of the Big Bar landslide, every fish counted. That same year, we were

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D O W N T O W N   O F F I C E

L A K E S I D E   O F F I C E

253 4th Avenue North  
Williams Lake, BC V2G 4T4  
Ph: (250)-392-3918  
Fax: (250)-398-5798

1729 South Lakeside Drive  
Williams Lake, BC V2G 3A9  
Ph: (778)-799-2145  
Fax: (778)-799-2142



shocked to learn that the Alaskan District 104 Fishery caught 45,000 Chilko sockeye, bound for our Tsilhqot'in Title lands. It's time for the Alaskan District 104 Fishery to be shut down while we still have a hope for the rebounding of salmon populations in the Fraser River system."

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**Media Contact:**

Myanna Desaulniers

Communications Manager

Tsilhqot'in National Government

(p) (250) 302-3731 (e) [myanna@tsilhqotin.ca](mailto:myanna@tsilhqotin.ca)