



Lax Kw'alaams Fishing Enterprises
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Area F Harvest Committee
bcntaadvisors@northernrollers.bc.ca

Subject: Letter of Support for the 2026 Area F Salmon Fishery Proposal

Dear Members of the Area F Harvest Committee

I am writing to express my formal support for the 2026 Area F Salmon Fishery Proposal submitted by the Area F Harvest Committee. As an advocate for sustainable fisheries management on the North Coast, I believe this proposal represents a highly disciplined, science-based, and balanced approach that honors conservation objectives while protecting the economic viability of coastal communities.

The Area F commercial troll fleet has consistently demonstrated its status as a modern, low-impact, and meticulously monitored fishery. Their commitment to sustainability is clearly reflected in the Fraser River Chinook Fishery Mortality Index, which showcases a sustained reduction in encounters with stocks of concern—specifically Spring 4₁ and Spring 5₂ Chinook—since 2019. By utilizing tools such as 100% dockside monitoring, daily electronic logbooks, and comprehensive DNA and coded-wire tag (CWT) sampling, the Area F fleet provides the high-resolution data necessary to enable precise, responsive, and precautionary in-season management.

I specifically endorse the targeted fishing opportunities outlined in the 2026 proposal, which align access with proven performance benchmarks:

- July 1 A–B Line Pink Salmon Directed Fishery: Opening this directed fishery with the continuation of the expanded Area 103 eastern boundary is a practical measure that dramatically improves operational safety for the ice-boat fleet, maintains selective harvesting, and enhances vital access for Northern First Nations.
- August 10 Chinook Retention: Restoring the August 10 opening date is deeply consistent with historical management precedents and stock composition data. Previous shifts to

later dates resulted in significant foregone economic opportunities for the fleet without yielding a demonstrated conservation benefit.

- Data-Driven Coho Opportunities: The proposed selective coho pilot and the Area 3 Terminal Coho Fishery are exceptionally well-justified by the strong 2025 escapement indicators from the Skeena and Ketchikan indexes. Because these opportunities are strictly time- and area-bounded, paired with conservative quotas and rapid-closure provisions, they present a safe pathway to navigate abundance surpluses.

Furthermore, I want to emphasize that the Area 3 Terminal Coho Fishery proposal relies on Nass River fish wheel indicators and is designed to align with regionally responsive management. This directly supports the food sovereignty, workforce opportunities, and traditional rights of local First Nations, including Lax Kw'alaams, while operating in total harmony with Indigenous law.

Approving this proposal supports a fleet that contributes meaningfully to our coastal economies and regional food systems without sacrificing conservation integrity. I strongly urge DFO to accept the 2026 Area F Salmon Fishery Proposal as written.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Shepert', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bill Shepert

Fisheries Director

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