

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION

Ref: 193341

Date: December 22, 2020

Title: Meeting with Stan Vander Waal and Reg Ens, BC Agriculture Council (BCAC).

Issue:

1. Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and matters related to health and safety on farms; inspections of on-farm accommodations; communication/processes for on-farm COVID outbreaks; centralized/regionalized facilities to accommodate COVID outbreaks on farms; and the compensation process for TFWs in self-isolation for suspected cases of COVID.
2. Addressing Farm Security with respect to trespass and cyberbullying.

Background:

TFW Health and Safety on Farms

- Recent COVID-19 outbreak at ^{s.22} emphasized the need for increased support to bridge the communications gaps between TFWs, employers, farm managers, BCAC and government.
- s.22

Inspections of On-Farm Accommodations

- Inspections of on-farm accommodations currently include federal (Service Canada; Employment and Social Development Canada; Labour; PHAC), provincial (AGRI; Ministry of Labour; WorkSafeBC) and local (BC Agriculture Council; Western Agriculture Labour Initiative; local health authorities) agencies, each with different mandates and authorities.
- This approach results in multiple inspections being conducted on farms at different times (both scheduled and unannounced) and different aspects being assessed.
- Farmers are frustrated and overwhelmed about the inspections process and timelines.

Communication/Processes for On-Farm COVID Outbreaks

- Recent increases in on-farm outbreaks demonstrate the need for additional support to farmers to simplify and clarify the processes and legislation that apply to on-farm outbreaks.

Centralized/Regionalized Quarantine Facilities

- On-farm accommodations are not approved or inspected with the expectation that large groups of individuals would use these quarters to self-isolate.
- Farms in the Greater Vancouver Region can leverage existing agreements/processes established at the Sheraton Hotel in Richmond to quarantine TFWs during the non-peak TFW arrival periods (costs are covered by the employer). Hotel capacity is dedicated to TFW arrivals through contract with the province.
- A centralized or regionalized approach (such as a hotel secured on an as/when/if needed basis) would be helpful for farmers in the Fraser Valley and Southwest regions to be able to triage TFWs (close contacts of COVID positive individuals or those awaiting testing).

CONFIDENTIAL

Compensation Process for TFWs in Self-isolation for Suspected Cases of COVID

- TFWs identified as close contacts of COVID positive individuals or those awaiting testing are not clearly or fully compensated financially by a particular entity (i.e. employer, WorkSafeBC, Employment and Social Development Canada [ESDC], etc.).
- TFWs who are COVID positive may be eligible to receive compensation through WorkSafeBC (which is contingent on employers filing a claim on their behalf).

Discussion:

TFW Health and Safety on Farms

- Industry, BCAC and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) may benefit from an additional position staffed through the Western Agriculture Labour Initiative to meet increased support demands and acute communication/process needs of farmers employing TFWs.

Inspections of On-Farm Accommodations

- Coordination of inspection amongst local, provincial and federal agencies is high on MAFF's priority list as a matter for improvement in the upcoming season.
- Service Canada initiated a pilot joint inspection review last summer which will help to inform our work (results have not been shared yet).
- In addition to streamlining the inspections process, education and outreach materials could be developed in partnership with AgSafe to coach employers about what to expect during the process and focus on behavior change and continuous improvement.

Communication/Processes for On-Farm Outbreaks

- Step-by-step guides or processes are required to clearly outline who/when to notify when TFWs are symptomatic; how to request testing; how to arrange self-isolation and/or cohort isolation (on farm/hotel). Materials should be translated into Spanish and Punjabi (at minimum).
- This work could be led by the Labour Unit in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the BC Center for Disease Control and BCAC. The Labour Unit has engaged the Corporate Services Agreement under Government Communication and Public Engagement to translate TFW-related documents.

Centralized/Regionalized Quarantine Facilities

- s.21
- The Labour Unit could liaise with major hotels in the Fraser Valley and Interior to solicit interest/availability for accommodating TFWs on an as/when/if needed basis due to on-farm outbreaks.
- This approach alleviates pressure from industry, eliminates the need for individual farms to approach various hotels, and lends credibility to the transaction by having government broker the dialogue (particularly since a hotel contract is already endorsed through MAFF).

Compensation Process for TFWs in Self-isolation for Suspected Cases of COVID

- The compensation process would benefit from a scenario and process plan, depending on the health state of TFWs. Currently, employers sometimes pay a certain number of hours.
- There may be an opportunity to seek a cost-sharing arrangement with MAFF and ESDC to ensure that individuals self-isolating but not confirmed COVID positive receive adequate financial compensation.

Farm Security (trespassing/cyber bullying).

Since 2017, there have been at least 12 documented on-farm protests and multiple other anti-farmed animal protest campaigns led by animal activist groups against the poultry, hog and dairy sectors in B.C. Other

animal agriculture sectors such as beef, sheep, goats, horses, etc. are vulnerable to animal activist protest campaigns, but have not been explicitly targeted to date. The most recent pre-planned incident occurred in 2019, with over 50 protestors trespassing on land and in barns at Excelsior Hog Farm in Abbotsford, many from out of province and some from outside of Canada. While not all animal rights activists believe in breaking the law to support their goals, extreme actions by some animal rights groups include illegal trespass, harassment, property damage, and aggressive media attacks on individual farmers and their families.

The Ministry of Agriculture has continued to work with industry representatives during roundtable discussions on how to address the ongoing concern of farm security for producers within B.C. This includes a focus on the following three components:

1. Prevention of extreme animal activism activities (i.e. deterrence of illegal trespass, harassment, property damage, and aggressive media attacks on individual farmers and their families)
2. Consequences (i.e. sufficient fines and/penalties for extreme animal activism activities)
3. Advocacy for the opposing narrative (i.e. support for farmed animal agriculture and validation of good practices)

These core values will be reflected in all documents the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries produces in regard to farm security.

Suggested Response:

s.13

ED ST/BB ADM AL A/DM JLM

CONFIDENTIAL

**Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, AND Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon
Innovation
DECISION NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION**

Ref: 193448

Date: January 7, 202

Title: Deputy Minister (DM) Agriculture and Oil and Gas Task Force Background Report

Issue: DM Task Force has requested Minister decision as to whether the Background Report is complete and should be released to the public.

Background:

In 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) was mandated with revitalizing the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and the Minister of AFF established an Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) to engage with stakeholders and the general public to provide Government with advice and guidance to support regulatory and administrative improvement. The IAC provided strategic advice and policy guidance to the minister based on the outcome of a broad engagement process with stakeholders across the province. The result was a final report (Revitalization Report) with 32 Recommendations.

Recommendation 25 was to:

Immediately work to address the imbalance between oil and gas development and agriculture in B.C.'s Northeast ALR.

- 1) Form a Deputy Minister-level, multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional Task Force to develop a Northeast ALR strategy; and*
- 2) Establish an increased ALR presence to support farmers and ranchers in B.C.'s Northeast ALR.*

Further, Recommendation 25 suggests that the DM Task Force develop a strategy to address the significant resource extraction issues impacting the ALR and its farmers and ranchers in B.C.'s Peace River region, including a review of the following issues and take actions as required:

- How to balance surface rights of the farmers/ranchers with sub-surface rights of the extractors;
- How the farmers/ranchers will be given authority to influence negotiations on the farm and location of oil and gas facilities and infrastructure;
- How the comments made to this Task Force by the farmers/ranchers will be accommodated in a balanced process;
- Whether the delegation agreement between the ALC and the B.C. Oil and Gas Commission (OGC) is the correct approach or if there is an alternative approach that would better protect agricultural interests and restore confidence in the regulatory system over the long term;
- Complete a fulsome impact assessment of oil and gas activity within the ALR; and
- Determine how farmers can access ongoing professional, independent support.

In November 2019, a DM Task Force was established comprising the Deputy Minister of AFF, the Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (EMLI), the Chief Executive Officer of the ALC, and the Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of the OGC.

In December 2019, the DM Task Force was formed. The DM Task Force accountability, as outlined in its Terms of Reference (ToR, Appendix A) is to examine the findings and recommendations from the Revitalization Report and, where and if appropriate, develop recommendations and initiate actions as

CONFIDENTIAL

may be necessary in providing government's response to the Report.

The ToR states that the DM Task Force will begin its work by developing a comprehensive fact-based public facing Background Report (Appendix B). The Background Report is a first step, meant to be used as a common information base to guide additional work undertaken by the DM Task Force. Information about the DM Task Force, including its ToR and the commitment to publish the Background Report, is on the [Ministry's website](#). A decision is required on how to publish the Background Report.

First Nations Considerations:

Located in NEBC, West Moberly, Halfway River, Doig River, Blueberry River and Sauleau First Nations (FN) did not receive all the land they were entitled to under Treaty 8. s.16

s.16

Discussion:

The initial internal target date for the Background Report was tentatively set for April 2020. However, COVID-19 impacted the project timeline and project continuity. In November 2020, the Background Report was completed and presented to the Assistant Deputy Minister Committee for Natural Resources (ADMCNR). In December 2020, the DM Task Force reviewed the Background Report and requested a joint briefing for AFF and EMLI Ministers.

The current version of the Background Report objectively describes how oil and gas and agricultural land use have evolved over time in the ALR of NEBC, identifies regional and provincial economic contributions of both sectors and includes the examination of existing policies and regulatory frameworks to identify any gaps that may warrant attention or change. The Background Report is not intended to identify or address the IAC's report finding of the perceived imbalance between the two sectors; rather it is expected to inform and guide the future work of the DMTF in developing recommendations and initiating actions as may be necessary in providing a government response to the IAC's final report.

The Background Report indicates a strong focus on the economics of the industries. While the economic information provides facts supporting both industry sectors, land use information is likely of greater importance to agriculture industry stakeholders. These stakeholders do not generally dispute the economic contribution of oil and gas to the area, but rather express concerns related to land use and related impacts to agriculture. Potential stakeholder concerns related to expectations of a greater depth of analysis on these land use issues could be offset through development of a communication strategy that outlines possible next steps, including the analysis of land use impacts.

Options:

s.13

Implications:

CONFIDENTIAL

s.13

s.13

Recommended Option: #1

Contact: David Travia, Executive Director, AFF, s.17

Contact: Chris Pasztor, Executive Director, EMLI, s.17

ED	ADM	A/DM
<u>DT</u>	<u>JLM</u>	<u>JLM</u>

CONFIDENTIAL

NATURAL RESOURCE SECTOR – JOINT MINISTRY INFORMATION NOTE

CONFIDENTIAL

Date: January 18, 2021

File: 280-20

CLIFF: NRS 260670

PREPARED FOR: Meeting of: the Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries (AFF), the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development (FLNR), Jennifer Dyson, Chair, Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and Kim Grout, Chief Executive Officer, ALC, to discuss challenges related to the use of Crown land which is designated as land within the ALR.

ISSUE: Competing Uses of Crown land designated as Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

BACKGROUND:

- The ALR covers about 4,615,880 hectares (or 5 percent) of the 94,646,000 hectares provincial land base.
- An estimated 49 percent of ALR is designated as Crown land (approximately 2.5 million hectares).
- According to the ministry's Geographic Information System, 1,282,800 hectares of Crown ALR is 'used for farming' (including land under grazing licenses). This is approximately 62 percent of total 'available' Crown ALR (not including Right of Way, Water, Indian reserve) (See Appendix A).

Use of Crown Land for Agriculture

- Agricultural activities in B.C. take place both on and off the ALR. In particular, much of B.C.'s summer seasonal livestock grazing occurs on Crown land some of which is not designated ALR.
- A large portion of the Crown ALR found within the Peace River and Fraser-Fort George areas are utilized for Crown grazing through range tenures.

Legislation

- Crown ALR is subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALC Act)* and its regulations.
- The *ALC Act* has paramountcy over most provincial legislation with exception of the *Interpretation Act*, the *Environment and Land Use Act* and the *Environmental Management Act*.
- The regulations of the *ALC Act* are very permissive in relation to forestry in the ALR. There are some provisions for recreation in the ALR.
- The ALC has authority to make decisions related to land use in the ALR. The purpose of the ALC, as outlined in Section 6 of the *ALC Act*, is to:
 - a) preserve agricultural land;
 - b) encourage farming in collaboration with other communities of interest; and
 - c) encourage local governments, First Nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.
- A large number of other provincial ministries, agencies and bodies have decision-making authority that affects land in the ALR.

CONFIDENTIAL

1 of 8

- FLNR has authority to make decisions respecting the tenure and use of Crown ALR under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), *Land Act*, *Water Sustainability Act* and *Range Act*.
- The FRPA outlines how all forest and range practices and resource-based activities are to be conducted on Crown land in B.C., while ensuring protection of everything in and on them, such as plants, animals and ecosystems. All forest and range licensees' activities are governed by FRPA and its regulations during all stages of planning, road building, logging, reforestation and/or grazing.
- The *Range Act* allows for rights to use or improve Crown range for grazing or cutting hay which is granted through a licence or permit.
- The *Land Act* allow for the tenure (permitting, licencing, leasing) or disposition of Crown land as per Crown Land Policies which includes:
 - Issuance of aquaculture tenures; as well as managing and licensing the wild harvest and culture of aquatic plants.
 - Issuance of Crown land grazing leases;
 - Issuance of grazing licences and permits; and
 - Licenses of occupation and permits as per Crown land policies
- The *Water Sustainability Act* allows for management and licencing of the use of water based on a priority scheme.

First Nations Considerations:

Where ALR land is governed by First Nations, applications for non-farm use must be submitted to the First Nation governments for approval and then forwarded to the ALC.

One-third of fish harvesting jobs are in First Nation communities, and salmon are of critical cultural, and socioeconomic importance. In B.C.'s four largest salmon farming companies, 30 percent of the jobs are staffed by First Nations. Approximately 78 percent of the salmon farming industry's operations are under agreement with the First Nation in whose territory they are working within.

DISCUSSION:

Non-farm use application process for Crown ALR

The *ALC Act* permits all farm uses as defined in the *Act* to occur in the ALR. Further, the Agriculture Land Reserve Use Regulation (ALRUR) identifies permitted non-farm uses that can occur in the ALR without application to the ALC. The ALRUR also outlines the farm uses and permitted non-farm uses which cannot be prohibited by local or First Nation governments in the ALR. For farm uses permitted in the ALRUR, ALC decision making is not required and therefore not considered in the decision-making process for granting tenures.

For non-farm uses that are not permitted by regulation to occur on the ALR, a landowner must submit an application for non-farm use to the local or First Nation Government. If approved by the local or First Nation Government, the application is then forwarded to the ALC. The ALC has the authority to make decisions related to non-farm uses in the ALR.

On Crown ALR, FLNR has the authority to approve tenures, and the ALC has authority to approve land use.

An applicant is required to submit a tenure application with FLNR and a non-farm use application with the local or First Nation government (if applicable) or the ALC. For non-farm use activities

which are not permitted by regulation to occur on Crown ALR, it is the responsibility of the tenure holder to make an application for non-farm use to the ALC.

When approving tenures and land use decisions on Crown ALR, FLNR staff should be aware that tenure approval has no force and effect until the ALC approves a non-farm use application. Approval of a tenure application prior to ALC approval of the related non-farm use places pressure on the ALC to approve an application or, in cases when an application for non-farm use is not made, pursue enforcement and compliance on the tenure holder.

Permissive Nature of the *ALC Act* for Forestry and Recreation

There are competing interests for Crown ALR lands including forestry, ecological conservation, and First Nations rights and title considerations. Non-farm uses permitted in the ALRUR supports government's broader provincial objectives and values, in addition to agriculture.

The ALRUR outlines a number of activities that can take place on the ALR without need for an application. For example, s. 10 of the ALRUR allows forestry to take place in the ALR without application to the ALC (see Appendix B). Section 22 of the ALRUR outlines activities that are permitted but may be prohibited including biodiversity conservation, passive recreation, heritage, wildlife and scenery viewing purposes. There are a number of recreational activities that are permitted on the ALR, including some that may not be prohibited by local or First Nation governments. It is important to note that even though the activities listed above are permitted, there may be instances where the ALC may need to be notified or an application may be required, e.g., if permitted thresholds are exceeded or if soil is being removed.

Current Actions – Crown ALR

- In order to ensure that competing provincial objectives are achieved while maintaining an agriculture-first agenda on the ALR, further engagement and policy work with FLNR staff is underway to understand and reconcile competing demands for Crown ALR and to establish consistent practices for tenure approval.
- Road and trail construction/maintenance authorized within FLNR require geomatics staff to develop maps. A new Status and Clearance Service Component of the FTA and Resource Road Systems will be going into production February 1, 2021. The geomatics staff will run a query to identify any conflicts on Crown land that require additional action. The ALR is one of the conflict layers included in the new component.
- Should the ALR be identified as a conflict for any FLNR tenured activity or project, the geomatics staff will work with operational staff to resolve the conflicts, including referral to the ALC.
- The Business Application for Forests staff within Forest Tenures Branch have distributed the conflict report that governs the new component. For the ALR, the description clarifies that the land must be maintained for agricultural use and that it is subject to rules and restrictions for use. The recommended action is to complete a referral to the Agricultural Land Commission for review and to make application for permitting, where required.

NEXT STEPS:

- Conduct broad policy analysis on non-farm activities permitted on Crown ALR and communicate that to FLNR decision makers.
- Form an AFF/FLNR staff level working group to identify process issues and propose options to establish consistent practices related to tenure approval on ALR.

Attachments: Appendix A Provincial Crown ALR Land Utilization, Appendix B Forestry is a Designated Farm Use in the ALRUR, Appendix C B.C. Aquaculture and Ocean-related Initiatives, APPENDIX D FLNRO Revision of Forest Tenuring Systems

Contact:

*ADM: Paul Rasmussen
Div: Regional Ops - South
Phone: s.17*

Alternate Contact:

*Name: David Borth, Director
Div/Region/Branch: Range Branch
Phone: s.17*

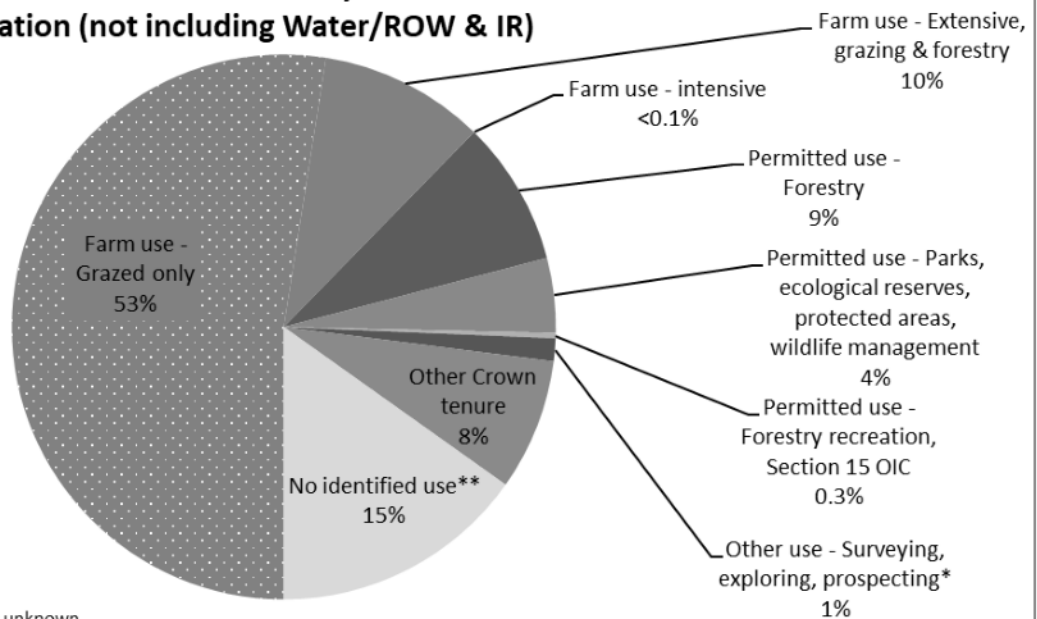
Prepared by:

*Name: Jackie Cushing, Senior Policy Analyst (AFF)
Branch/Region: Agriculture Science & Policy Division
Phone: 778 974-2976*

Reviewed by	Initials	Date
DM	TE	January 27, 2021
DMO		
ADM	JLM	January 25, 2021
PRGM Dir./Mgr.		

APPENDIX A: Provincial Crown ALR Land Utilization

Provincial Crown ALR Land Utilization by Uses Permitted in the Regulation (not including Water/ROW & IR)



* Intention to restore is unknown

APPENDIX B: Forestry is a Designated Farm Use in the ALRUR

Section 10 of the ALRUR allows forestry to take place in the ALR without application to the ALC

Forestry

10 The following uses of agricultural land are designated as farm uses and may not be prohibited as described in section 4:

- (a) deliberately retaining, introducing and mixing trees or other plants in crop or animal production systems to provide an economic return, commonly referred to as "agroforestry";
- (b) producing botanical forest products;
- (c) producing and harvesting timber, including engaging in silviculture and forest protection activities.

APPENDIX C: B.C. Aquaculture and Ocean-related Initiatives

Currently, accountabilities for aquaculture and ocean-related initiatives are distributed across the provincial government. Several provincial agencies play lead roles in delivering key aspects of this work:

- FLNR is responsible for issuance of coastal tenures, freshwater fisheries management and is lead on integrated marine planning initiatives.
- AFF leads strategic aquaculture policy, seafood development, and is the provincial lead for the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers (CCFAM).
- Environment and Climate Change Strategy (aquatic invasive species, marine incident planning and response, marine protected area (MPA) management, compliance and enforcement).
- Other ministries, such as Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, also have interests in fisheries and ocean-related work

Coastal Marine Strategy

As a result of the recent provincial election, FLNR has been issued the task to lead in the development of an integrated coastal marine strategy to better protect coastal marine habitat while growing coastal economies. AFF and ENV have been asked to support this work which will be conducted in partnership with First Nations and federal and local governments. Currently, FLNR is working to develop a framework strategy to begin this work.

AFF can support these efforts through its involvement in seafood economies, including the tidal recreational, commercial and aquaculture fisheries. As an example, AFF is supporting the Coastal First Nations (CFN) through a \$150K contribution to develop a Northern Shellfish Aquaculture Strategy which will support shellfish aquaculture in northern BC. This initiative will help deliver on the need to protect the environment while growing coastal economies.

APPENDIX D-FLNR Revision of Forest Tenuring Systems

Revision of the forest tenuring systems revision will not change the process of statusing. The ALR data is and will remain a part of FLNR's adjudication process. The change occurring is where the process is carried out. Previously, the conflict report was located within Forest Tenure Administration System (FTA) and the report was cumbersome. The new service is a stand-alone component of the system and is a much more streamlined and efficient process. The system training team is holding a series of webinars over the next few weeks to train staff on the new status and clearance module. There will be training materials available for new staff.

Status and Clearance Service Component

The SNCSC will become a single source for statusing and clearing applications on the provincial land base within the forestry programs. This tool has been developed to enable the adoption of other business areas sector-wide in the future.

Part of the status and clearance process is to review potential conflicts that are identified through the intersection of the spatial data found within an area of interest from a given tenure application, this includes the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) data layer. These potential conflicts must be reported to and reviewed by the District Decision Maker for resolution prior to the issuance or rejection of an application. If an application area of interest overlaps with ALR land, then a referral to the Agricultural Land Commission would be required.

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION FOR
MEETING

Ref: 193321

Date: January 12, 2021

Title: B.C. Watershed Security Coalition (BCWSC) has requested a meeting with Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly.

Issue: The BCWSC would like to discuss the new provincial mandates for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF), which include working to restore wild salmon and supporting the Ministers of Environment (ENV) and Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR) in development of a watershed security strategy.

Background: The B.C. Watershed Security Coalition is an association consisting of member organizations with a shared interest in protecting B.C.'s water and watersheds. Membership includes several high-profile organizations:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| -Watersheds B.C. | -B.C. Freshwater Legacy Initiative |
| -Pacific Salmon Foundation | -Freshwater Alliance |
| -Watershed Watch Salmon Society | -Rivershed Society of B.C. |
| -Outdoor Recreation Council of B.C. | -B.C. Wildlife Federation |

BCWSC is also endorsed by a number of domestic and international organizations and institutions. The Coalition is led by co-chairs Coree Tull, Director at Canadian Freshwater Alliance; and Tim Morris, Project Director at B.C. Freshwater Legacy Initiative. Their vision is for more prosperous communities, healthier people, cleaner water, restored salmon runs, and authentic and enduring partnerships between First Nations and non-Indigenous British Columbians. One of BCWSC's main goals in implementing this vision is to encourage the provincial government to invest in and protect watersheds in order to maximize the economic and environmental potential they can sustain.

First Nations Considerations:

First Nations have significant social, economic, and cultural ties to species like wild Pacific salmon and the habitat that supports these stocks. Many First Nations communities in B.C. are rural and coastal, with high dependency on the preservation of adjacent watersheds for their own water source, as well as for sustaining other species of importance for their people.

Discussion: In 2019, ENV received a one-time \$37 million contribution from the Contingencies: Pandemic Response and Economic Recovery Vote to fund watershed, wetland, species and ecosystem restoration initiatives across the province. Two Treasury Board submissions were prepared: Watersheds and Wetlands; and Species and Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration.

Watersheds and Wetlands (Watersheds B.C.) received \$27M to deliver over 40 shovel-ready watershed restoration and conservation projects proposed by Watersheds BC, a non-government organization focused on improved watershed planning and governance in B.C. Watersheds BC is a member of the BCWSC and was on hand for the public announcement of this partnership in September 2020.

Species and Ecosystems Conservation and Restoration received \$10.215M to deliver more than 65 species and ecosystem conservation and restoration projects proposed by ENV and FLNR that cover both terrestrial and aquatic environments. \$10M was provided to fund projects and \$215K was provided to

CONFIDENTIAL

FLNR to fund up to 16 fulltime employees (FTE) to support administration of permits needed by projects across both submissions.

Proposals focus on a range of projects that support government's environmental, Clean BC, and Climate Ready BC objectives. Projects are intended to:

- Restore healthy watersheds to improve climate mitigation and adaptation;
- Conserve species and habitat by maintaining natural pest control services and restoring areas;
- Provide natural solutions to flood prevention;
- Build natural buffers to prevent polluted runoff from entering waterways;
- Increase drinking water resilience to mitigate the impact of wildfires;
- Improve food security, restore natural carbon sinks; and
- Strengthen water monitoring capacity to identify climate risks and support effective planning.

ENV worked with FLNR and AFF to ensure all projects were coordinated and supported across agencies, met economic and environmental criteria, and avoided duplication of project funding (i.e., ensuring no duplication with B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) projects). The B.C. Real Estate Foundation (BCREF) will administer the funds for the Watersheds and Wetlands projects.

After the 2020 election, the Minister of Environment received a mandate to: *"With support from the Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, lead work to protect clean water, including through the creation of a Watershed Security Strategy and the associated Watershed Security Fund."*

Details of this mandate work are not yet finalized. However, ENV has submitted proposals to the Premier's Office for the development and implementation of a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund that addresses key issues, challenges and strategies related to management and governance of water quality, water quantity, aquatic ecosystems, and watershed health in B.C. These strategies and actions will focus on improving and enhancing:

- Watershed governance (e.g., shared and local decision making, accountability);
- Healthy drinking water and source water protection;
- Ecosystem management and conservation; and
- Investment in sustainable communities and economies and economic security. AFF is poised to play a key support role in this commitment through the work of Parliamentary Secretary Fin Donnelly.

Suggested Response:

- **Government is committed to developing a Watershed Security Strategy and associated Fund, led by ENV with support from FLNR and AFF.**
- **As a part of StrongerBC, \$27M in COVID stimulus funding is currently being invested in watershed health as part of government's economic recovery plan, and over \$40M has been invested in habitat to support wild salmon through BCSRIF, with more to come in 2021.**
- **Thank you for your interest in working with the Province on the development of a Strategy and Fund. We look forward to working with the B.C. Watershed Security Coalition on our shared commitments to watershed health and a desire to see the Strategy be a success.**

Contact: Mike Turner, Senior Manager, IGR, Fisheries and Aquaculture, 778-698-3129

ED

DT

ADM

JLM

DM

TE

CONFIDENTIAL

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION FOR MEETING

Ref: 193681

Date: January 22, 2021

Title: Minister Popham is scheduled to meet with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Minister Bernadette Jordan.

Issue: The meeting is to discuss several files of joint interest and responsibilities, including the impacts of the Discovery Islands salmon farm licenses decision.

Background:

1. Discovery Islands Decision on Aquaculture Licensing:

- On September 28, 2020, DFO responded to Cohen Recommendation #19 by announcing the completion of nine peer-reviewed risk assessments. All nine assessments found that the transfer of pathogens posed minimal risk to abundance and diversity of migrating Fraser River sockeye salmon in the area, thus allowing DFO to continue to issue licenses for the area.
- Hon. Bernadette Jordan, Minister, announced shortly thereafter that DFO would consult Discovery Islands First Nations to better understand their position and concerns and subsequently established its own process for consulting with First Nations about the renewal of aquaculture licences.
- In December 2020, Minister Jordan announced that DFO will phase out salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands by June 2022. This coincides with timing of the Provincial salmon farm tenure policy implementation. The Province is currently working with DFO to understand implications to this decision and mitigate any impacts to communities that rely on these operations.
- Most of the tenures are on a month-to-month overhold renewal scheme as a result of the provincial moratorium on issuance of new tenures pending DFO's Cohen Response. There are, however, tenures with expiry dates past this date and up to 2034.
- DFO has provided the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNR) summary tables of the relevant Discovery Island sites, and their proportional contribution by company and by B.C. production (Appendices 1-3). Briefly, the area represents 32 percent of current B.C. farmed biomass and represents approximately 20 percent of provincial aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019).
- On January 18, 2021, MOWI Canada West, Cermaq Canada, and Grieg Seafood applied to the Federal Court of Canada for a judicial review of the decision to phase out salmon farming in the waters off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island by June 30, 2022.
- The Province is currently pressing the Federal Government to complete an impact assessment and provide resources and support for communities, businesses, and individuals impacted by their Discovery Islands decision.

Key Messages:

- **B.C. understands the work done by the federal government to address concerns regarding fish farming in the Discovery Islands but remains concerned about impacts and how the Federal Government will address them.**
- **We look forward to hearing how they will mitigate the impact of this decision on the families and communities of Northern Vancouver Island.**
- **We will continue to work together with our federal colleagues to do everything we can to protect and rebuild our critical wild salmon stocks while at the same time mitigating economic impacts your Discovery Islands decision has caused for Northern Vancouver Island.**

2. DFO 2025 Transition Plan for Aquaculture:

- On December 13, 2019, the DFO Minister received a mandate that included developing a plan to transition from open-net pen salmon farming in coastal B.C. by 2025.
- In January 2020, DFO Minister Jordan further clarified that the goal was to develop the transition plan by 2025, not to complete the transition by 2025. Along with a “responsible plan for aquaculture”, DFO also noted plans to continue with the development of a new federal *Aquaculture Act*.
- In September 2020, DFO requested the Province be involved at a Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC) level for the development of the transition plan. The purpose of the SOC is to provide strategic direction for the objectives and parameters of the plan, including providing direction on engagement strategy, other research and analysis needed to inform a plan for open-net pen aquaculture in coastal B.C., and drawing linkages to other initiatives that are relevant and could inform plan development.
- The Province is currently committed to participate in the SOC and associated Technical Working Group (TWG) under observer status.
- In December 2020, Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly (PS Donnelly) was invited by DFO Parliamentary Secretary Terry Beech to participate in 2025 Transition pre-consultation. Full consultation meetings are planned for late February and early March. These will include PS Donnelly and staff and will form the basis of an interim report due to Minister Jordan this spring.

Key Messages:

- **B.C. is interested in any new updates about the new federal mandate to develop a responsible plan to transition from open-net pen salmon farming in coastal B.C. by 2025.**
- **B.C. appreciates the invitation and inclusion by Parliamentary Secretary Beech in the consultation process, and we look forward to seeing the resulting interim report.**

3. Federal Minister supplemental mandate letter and approach:

- On January 15, 2021, Minister Jordan was issued a supplemental mandate letter which outlines further responsibilities considering the impact the global pandemic has had on Canadians.
- The letter calls for Minister Jordan to:
 - Work in close collaboration with relevant ministers, as well as with First Nations, provincial and territorial authorities, relevant organizations and communities to bring forward a ‘Pacific Salmon Strategy’ and deliver on our commitment to conserve and protect wild Pacific salmon and their habitats and ecosystems;
 - Continue to lead efforts to develop a comprehensive ‘blue economy’ strategy focused on growing Canada’s ocean economy to create good middle-class jobs and opportunities for ocean sectors and coastal communities, while advancing reconciliation and conservation objectives.

Key Messages:

- **Given B.C. is the largest contributing province to the Blue Economy in Canada and the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that we jointly continue to invest in the growth and recovery of the industries, species and environments that our communities rely on.**
- **Minister Popham is responsible for overseeing the doubling of the Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, and we will be seeking the continuation of Canada’s financial support to continue the good work we are doing to conserve and revitalize Pacific Salmon populations under BCSRIF.**

- **The Province is interested to learn how the Blue Economy initiative relates to the new provincial mandate in developing and implementing a new provincial coastal marine strategy which will further environmental restoration while developing a sustainable path for coastal economies.**
- **The Province is interested to learn more about the proposed Pacific Salmon Strategy, how it aligns with the provincial mandate led by Parliamentary Secretary Fin Donnelly, to revitalize B.C.'s wild salmon populations.**

4. Status of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) commissioner:

- The term of the current representative of the Province of British Columbia to the Canada-US Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC), Mr. Paul Sprout, has expired, as per his resignation in October 2019. Mr. Sprout served as B.C.'s Commissioner since his appointment by the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans originally in 2012, and again in 2016.
- On October 9, 2019, DFO sent a letter to B.C.'s Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat (IGRS) Associate DM Pierrette Maranda requesting a single nomination as provincial representative to the PSC for consideration for appointment by the DFO Minister.
- s.12; s.16
- Although AFF, formerly AGRI, officials have received no formal letter of communication, it is now understood that DFO will require more nominees from B.C. – in part to ensure that DFO Minister Jordan is not fettered in decision making and has options regarding balance on the Canadian delegation. It should be noted that in previous requests for PSC appointment nominees, DFO had requested that more than one name be provided, and it was unusual in 2019 to receive a request for a single nominee.
- s.16
- Direction is now sought in the selection of additional nominees for appointment as the next provincial representative to the PSC at this time.

Key Messages:

- **B.C. encourages DFO to respond to our 2019 PSC nomination letter, so the Province can either provide more nominees, or move forward with our current nominee, and ensure provincial representation at the Pacific Salmon Treaty tables.**

5. Division of roles and responsibilities for Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly and Minister Popham:

- Discussions on the division of fish, aquaculture and seafood files within the Ministry as they relate to the mandates of Minister Popham and Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly, have been finalized.

Key Messages:

- **I will continue to oversee the development of marine plants and shellfish aquaculture sectors, as well as general seafood marketing.**
- **Parliamentary Secretary will oversee all other files including commercial fisheries, wild salmon and steelhead recovery, and finfish aquaculture.**

6. Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program (FACTAP)

- FACTAP is a \$20 million national contribution program that spanned over 4 years (2017 to 2021) and aims to facilitate the adoption of market-ready technologies that reduce the environmental footprint and promote the clean economic growth of B.C.'s fisheries, aquaculture and seafood processing industries.
- The program is cost-shared, with a maximum of 75 percent from federal funds, 10 percent from the Province, and a minimum of 15 percent from the proponent.
- FACTAP has funded 56 projects in B.C., worth \$10.1M in total project costs. Relative contributions to date: \$7.0M (DFO); \$2.1M (Industry); \$1.0M (Province of B.C.). Of those projects, 27 were aquaculture, 29 were fisheries, and 2 were seafood processing projects.
- FACTAP is due to expire on March 31, 2021, with no official plans to renew. However, DFO staff have indicated a renewal of FACTAP may be possible.

Key Messages:

- **FACTAP has received positive feedback from industry for its ability to support the timely adoption of clean technologies that may have otherwise been financially infeasible.**
- **B.C. is eager to learn if DFO has plans to renew FACTAP after its expiry this fiscal year.**

Contact: Mike Turner, Sr. Manager, Intergovernmental Relations, Fisheries and Aquaculture, 778-698-3129
Tyson Carswell, Senior Policy Analyst, 778-698-4056

ED ADM JLM DM TE

APPENDIX 1: Total production impacted by DI decision, in metric tonnes and in %, relative to total B.C. production (Provided by DFO)

SALMON	Total Licensed Biomass (MT)	Current Biomass - MT (July 2020)	Harvested Biomass			Revenue		
			2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Discovery Islands	46153	18968	15,397,101	11,239,777	17,963,676	\$ 130,566,881	\$ 105,135,943	\$ 131,807,376
All of BC	295299	59574	85,349,214	86,853,238	88,791,142	\$ 725,993,980	\$ 770,724,950	\$ 661,934,806
% BC	16%	32%	18%	13%	20%	18%	14%	20%

APPENDIX 2: Impacts in tonnes and % on total licensed production for each company, for Discovery Islands and Broughton Archipelago (Provided by DFO)

	Total Licensed Production (MT)	Harvested Production (MT)		
		2017	2018	2019
Total Salmon – B.C.	297,172	85,349	86,853	88,791
MOWI	150,675	47,347	39,483	49,887
Cermaq	68,788	24,018	25,050	19,742
Grieg	63,000	11,429	19,800	16,809
Yellow Island	750	2	19	4
Saltstream	230	9	-	-
Discovery Passage*	51,226	19,820	11,240	21,280
	17%	23%	13%	24%
MOWI	38,968	15,473	3,984	14,897
	26%	33%	10%	30%
Cermaq	8,278	4,336	4,799	5,038
	12%	18%	19%	26%
Grieg	3,000	-	2,438	1,340
	-	-	12%	8%
Yellow Island	750	2	19	4
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Saltstream	230	9	-	-
	100%	100%	-	-
Broughton Archipelago	58,882	22,955	13,698	22,500
	20%	27%	16%	25%
MOWI	28,752	8,443	12,946	6,892
	19%	18%	33%	14%
Cermaq	15,230	8,868	751	7,034
	22%	37%	3%	36%
Grieg	14,900	5,644	-	8,574
	24%	49%	-	51%

CONFIDENTIAL

APPENDIX 3: List of Aquaculture Sites in the Discovery Islands

DFO Facility Ref.	Facility	Licence Holder	Landfile No.	Pacific Fishery Mgmt. Area	Production Planned in 2021
78	Phillips Arm, Cardero Channel	Mowi	2403170	13-24	Y
1401	Brent Island, Okisollo Channel	Cermaq	1407983	13-10	Y
304	Raza Island, Raza Passage	Cermaq	2403035	13-14	Y
138	Dunsterville Bay, Hoskyn Channel	Mowi	1401659	13-13	N
211	Sonora Island, Okisollo Channel	Mowi	1403325	13-10	Y
377	Bickley Bay, East Thurlow Island	Mowi	1404309	13-25	N
378	Thurlow Point South, Nodales Channel	Mowi	1403300	13-26	N
388	Brougham Point, East Thurlow Island	Mowi	1403301	13-26	N
547	Read Island, Bear Bay	Mowi	1401611	13-12	N
733	Cyrus Rocks, Okisollo Channel	Mowi	1406292	13-12	N
769	Young Passage, Sonora Island	Mowi	1405768	13-26	N
1581	Hardwicke Is. Site B, Chancellor Channel	Mowi	1409321	13-40	Y
456	Doctor Bay, West Redonda Island	622335 British Columbia Ltd.	0193432	15-5	Y
216	East of Maude Island, Discovery Passage	Yellow Island Aquaculture (1994) Ltd.	1401748	13-3	Y
871	Barnes Bay, Sonora Island	Grieg	1405542	13-10	Y
380	Sonora Pt., Nodales Channel	Mowi	1403144	13-26	Y
306	Venture Point, Sonora Island	Cermaq	1403267	13-10	Y
790	Chancellor Channel, West Thurlow Island	Mowi	1405245	13-41	Y
100	Lees Bay, N. Shore, West Thurlow Island	Mowi	1401949	13-41	Y

CONFIDENTIAL

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR INFORMATION

Ref: 193701

Date: January 25, 2021

Title: Meeting between Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly and Watershed Watch Salmon Society.

Issue: The Executive Director of Watershed Watch Salmon Society will meet with Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly on January 28, 2021 to discuss a range of issues related to the Ministry's mandate.

Background: The Watershed Watch Salmon Society (WWSS) is a non-profit self-described advocacy organization that aims to "defend and rebuild B.C.'s wild salmon". It was founded about 20 years ago and has more than 10 staff based in Vancouver. WWSS Executive Director, Aaron Hill, will meet with Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly (PSD) on January 28, 2021 and has indicated his interest in discussing all elements of PSD's 2021 Mandate Letter and:

1. Support in promoting salmon safe flood control in the lower Fraser, including action on the Select Standing Committee on Finances and Government Services recent recommendation (#110) for Budget 2021;
2. Consultations on the federal-initiated process to work with the province to transition open-net cage salmon farms out of B.C.'s coastal waters by 2025; and
3. Federal collaboration on wild salmon and hatcheries, including the federal minister's new appended mandate letter commitment "to bring forward a Pacific Salmon Strategy and deliver on our commitment to conserve and protect wild Pacific salmon and their habitats and ecosystems."

Aaron Hill has recently been quoted in the media regarding his concerns around the supporting innovation in fish hatcheries section of PSD's Mandate letter. Specifically, he has raised that this could result in a hatchery program that puts the economic needs of fisheries above the needs of wild salmon. WWSS were also in the press recently regarding their support for the phase out of fish farms in the Discovery Islands. They also indicated that there continues to be a need to regulate and monitor the fish farms, particularly during the spring wild salmon out-migration, and political pressure is needed to ensure future governments uphold the decision.

First Nations Considerations: First Nations make up a significant proportion of commercial fishermen in the province, as well as have economic interests in tidal sportfishing and aquaculture. Additionally, First Nations have strong cultural and social ties to salmon and the marine environment consecrated in a Constitutional right to harvest fish. About 31 percent of all commercial fishing jobs (including processing) are held by B.C.'s Indigenous Peoples.

Discussion:

1. Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the "Committee") and the Coastal Strategy

The Committee is mandated by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia to conduct an annual budget consultation. The Report on the Budget 2021 contains the following recommendation (#110) under the subtitle Natural Disasters and Emergency Preparedness:

- *Continue investing in prevention, mitigation, adaptation, response and recovery for wildfire, flood and climate-related natural disasters, while also protecting local fish and wildlife, as well as earthquake response and resiliency.*

CONFIDENTIAL

Multiple agencies across provincial government are responsible for the many elements described above, and the Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations has been mandated to lead work to develop a new provincial coastal marine strategy to better protect coastal habitat while growing coastal economies. B.C. is one of the few maritime jurisdictions in North America without a dedicated coastal strategy or legislation. This presents a unique opportunity to deliver something novel under the auspices of the Declaration Act and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It is expected to garner significant interest by First Nations, federal and local governments, stakeholders and the general public. Articulating a coastal marine strategy could address a number of issues, including:

- Implementing existing marine programs in a coordinated, efficient way;
- Addressing coastal climate change and adaptation; and
- Enhancing shoreline protection and management. Additionally, the new Watershed Security Strategy and Fund and Biodiversity Strategy will contribute to this and the protection of fish habitat.

Key Messages

- **Our government has committed to developing a new provincial coastal marine strategy to better protect coastal habitat while growing coastal economies (led by Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations).**
- **This strategy will contribute to implementing existing marine programs in a coordinated and efficient way, addressing coastal climate change and adaptation, and enhancing shoreline protection and management**

2. 2025 Transition and Discovery Islands

In response to ongoing concerns around environmental impact of open-net pen salmon farming, the Federal Liberals announced a Platform commitment in 2019 to develop a plan by 2025 to shift away from open-net pen salmon aquaculture in B.C. The commitment was subsequently translated into a mandate commitment for Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Minister Bernadette Jordan. Minister Jordan further clarified that the goal was to develop the transition plan by 2025, not to complete the transition by 2025. This promise has been lauded by critics of the industry in B.C.; however, it is seen as a significant technological and financial barrier by industry.

On December 18, 2020, DFO announced that Canada is phasing out salmon farming in the Discovery Islands over the following 18 months. DFO has jurisdiction over salmon farm licensing, and their announcement means all salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands will be phased out by June 2022. This decision will impact the four finfish aquaculture companies operating in this area through 22 farm sites: MOWI Canada West (16 farms), Cermaq Canada (three farms), Grieg Seafood (one farm), Yellow Island Aquaculture (one farm), and Saltspring Engineering (one farm). There are approximately 100 jobs provided by Discovery Island finfish production in addition to office jobs in Campbell River and other jobs created through indirect employment.

In response to the decision by the federal government to phase out fish farms in the Discovery Islands, the Ministry is supporting the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation (JERI) to develop options for economic recovery from the decision. JERI has been meeting with First Nations, communities and businesses in the area.

Key Messages

- **In October 2020, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans established its own process for consulting with First Nations about the renewal of aquaculture licences in the Discovery Islands. It has now concluded that it will phase out salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands by June 2022.**

- **B.C. appreciates the work done by the federal government to address concerns regarding fish farming in the Discovery Islands. We look forward to hearing how they will mitigate the impact of this decision on the families and communities of Northern Vancouver Island.**

3. Pacific Salmon Recovery and Hatcheries

The overall expectation for 2021 Pacific salmon returns to B.C. waters is generally very low and similar to 2020. The 2020 return to the Fraser River system was the lowest on record. The level of uncertainty with forecast remains high but there are a few positive exceptions. B.C. has been working on a number of fronts to protect and restore wild salmon and has recently committed to working with the federal government to double the British Columbia Salmon Restoration Innovation Fund (additional \$42.5 million from B.C.). Provincial staff are working internally across agencies and with DFO on initiatives to support salmon recovery. The Province will also be working with DFO to learn more about its recently announced plans to develop a Federal Pacific Salmon Strategy and where the Province may play a role.

The Province has an interest in salmon hatchery production and the benefits resulting from harvest and conservation opportunities provided by them. DFO is the agency responsible for salmon hatchery production licensing and provides funding to salmon hatcheries within B.C., including contributions to feed costs.

The role of hatcheries in salmon restoration is a complex issue, and large-scale production facilities are reported to have adverse effects on wild salmon populations. Recently, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) reported that major enhancement facilities can have a population-level effect on wild chinook. B.C.'s focus is on supporting small-scale and community hatcheries. B.C. and DFO, through the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF), have contracted the Pacific Salmon Foundation to conduct a study on the effectiveness of hatcheries in B.C. This work will further inform strategies for using hatcheries as an effective and positive tool for wild salmon restoration and fisheries development.

Key Messages

- **The protection of wild salmon is critically important to B.C.'s environment, history, economy and way of life.**
- **Our government has been working with the federal government, First Nations, conservation organizations and industry to support the conservation of wild salmon in the province.**
- **There are many factors involved in the declining wild salmon population, and this problem requires diverse tools and perspectives to help maintain and restore current wild salmon stocks.**
- **This is why our government has taken significant action over the last three years to protect and restore wild salmon stocks while creating a more sustainable future for local communities and workers.**
- **Strategic use of hatcheries is an important component of supporting and revitalizing wild salmon populations, and community stewardship and education.**
- **With the future doubling of BCSRIF and renewed commitment to supporting innovation in hatcheries, B.C. is dedicated to setting hatchery innovation as one of the priorities for project funding.**
- **AFF continues to work closely with DFO to identify options for an expanded provincial role in community-based hatcheries.**

Contact: Rebecca Wardle, Senior Policy Analyst, 236-479-2417

ED

ADM

DM

CONFIDENTIAL

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION FOR MEETING
with Minister Kahlon and Food Security Task Force members
(Peter Dhillon, Lenore Newman and Arvind Gupta) on January 29, 2021

Ref: 193667

Date: January 22, 2021

Title: Meeting with Minister Kahlon and members of the Food Security Task Force (FSTF).

Issue: Minister Kahlon requested a meeting with Minister Popham and members of the FSTF (Peter Dhillon, Lenore Newman and Arvind Gupta) to learn about the development of the FSTF report.

Background:

The Province established the FSTF in July 2019. The FSTF was made up of three members from industry and academia:

1. Peter Dhillon (Chair) - CEO of OceanSpray;
2. Lenore Newman - Director of Food and Agriculture Institute at University of Fraser Valley; and
3. Arvind Gupta - Computer science professor at Universities of Toronto and British Columbia.

In late 2019, FSTF conducted targeted stakeholder engagement and subsequently released their report titled “The Future of BCs Food Systems” in January 2020 and made four recommendations:

1. Adopt the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) and seek to implement these in future agricultural policies.
2. Establish B.C. as a global agri-tech leader by supporting the innovation pathway including the development, demonstration, and deployment of novel technologies.
3. Create an agriculture and agri-tech institute as a collaborative entity across post-secondary institutions to drive excellence in priority areas and deepen the knowledge base and talent pool for the agriculture innovation agenda.
4. Ensure there is a place to grow food and support emerging agri-tech industries by examining land use policies and other regulatory considerations.

The Ministries of Agriculture, Food and Fish (AFF) and partner ministries (Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation [JERI], Advanced Education and Skills Training and Attorney General and Ministry responsible for Housing) have been exploring options for Government for implementation of each FSTF recommendation, aligned with government priorities and new mandate commitments.

AFF and JERI currently work together in delivering supports for agri-tech to grow in B.C., with responsibilities divided as follows:

- AFF drives agriculture industry-relevant innovation by representing end-user needs for agri-tech development and adoption; and
- JERI facilitates major investment, agri-tech sector support and economic recovery planning.
 - In December 2020, JERI launched an “Agritech Grant Program” that will invest \$3 million to help B.C. agri-tech companies scale up, expand and develop technologies to increase sustainable and regenerative food production in BC. Grants of up to \$500,000 are available to B.C. based companies and applications are open until February 12, 2021.

Discussion:

Agri-tech research/analysis:

AFF, through the Agri-tech Land Use Secretariat, undertook extensive work to understand the FSTF recommendations and agri-tech more broadly. The research found that the agri-tech sector is strong, and COVID created increased demand for products and services. See table below for economic impacts of the

CONFIDENTIAL

agri-tech industry:

Economic impacts of the Agri-tech Industry in B.C.¹

	2019	2025 (projected)
Total Output (millions)	\$718.7	\$1,162.8
Total Employment (FTEs)	2,805	4,392
Government Revenue (millions)	\$74.5	\$117.3
Export Revenues (millions)	\$147.5	\$238.7

Agri-tech firms are similar to many in the tech sector, with fierce competition for land and tech talent in the lower mainland; CEO's clearly indicated that to remain competitive and continue to grow, relocating to the interior is not an option for their businesses. One in 5 companies surveyed cited land constraints (availability, cost, location) as a barrier to future growth. Some companies are suggesting they are leaving B.C. due to other jurisdictions being more affordable, even though there is a market for agri-tech in B.C..

Access to lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is viewed as an affordable alternative, as industrial land is 10-12 times more expensive, and new industrial parks from Delta to Abbotsford have lease rates 2-3 times higher than neighboring jurisdictions. Of 108 agri-tech companies, 16% operate on ALR, and 6% operate on land excluded from the ALR (re-zoned to light industrial). However, agri-tech companies that have previous experience with the Agricultural Land Commission expressed concerns over certainty and timeliness of application reviews and decisions (this caution applies to local government processes as well) – making ALR land not a viable option for many agri-tech companies.

Opportunities to advance FSTF Response Recommendation, under current mandate:

In the 2020 AFF Ministerial Mandate letter there are two items that reference agri-tech and food security. One item specifically mentions “drawing on the recommendations of the [FSTF]”, and the other encourages working with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation (JERI) to establish a “Regenerative Agricultural Network” that uses agri-tech.

The new mandate commitments position both ministries to progress agri-tech supports through work on regenerative agriculture, focused on increasing productivity of the agriculture sector and agricultural land through technology (e.g., soil health and carbon sequestration).

With regards to the specific recommendation on finding a place to grow the agri-tech sector, government may wish to consider a less controversial approach to finding a place to grow the agri-tech sector. There is an opportunity to engage with local governments that have an interest in actively encouraging agri-tech as part of their strategic land use planning (as an alternative to a complex provincial legislative tool). The ministries may also consider dedicated resources to support the agri-tech sector directly, through a “concierge service” to help companies identify lands and navigate approval processes.

Based on the research done by the ALUS, there is a need to continue to grow existing companies with dedicated funding for innovation, supporting those in early start-up stages, and having a specific focus on those that are in scale up phase. AFF can continue to leverage the AG-Tech Venture Accelerating Program (AVAP) to support existing companies, including increasing support to emerging companies from outside the metro area. AFF can also coordinate and partner with the federal government and look for opportunities to leverage programs such as Western Economic Diversification Canada, Sustainable Development Technology Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

¹ MNP 2020 Study: Data sources are Stats Canada and survey of 47 BC-based companies in Aug-Sept, 2020.

AFF and JERI could also consider developing a robust agri-tech strategy for this emerging sector with recommendations on future policy and business development needs to grow and develop a competitive sector.

Suggested Response:

- Thank the Food Security Task Force for their work and report on food security in the province.
- Affirm the Province's commitment to working to grow the agri-tech sector.
- Inform the Food Security Task Force that both Ministries are currently studying how the report recommendations fit within the new broad mandate commitments.
- Request that the FSTF members continue to work with the Ministries to achieve the objectives outlined in the FSTF report.

Contact: Diana Berry, Policy and Project Analyst, 778-698-3427

ED	RE	ADM	AL	DM	TE
_____		_____		_____	

CONFIDENTIAL

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION

Ref: 193497

Date: February 1, 2021

Title: Meeting between Minister Popham and BC Dairy Association representatives

Issue: Post election and new mandate check in with the BC Dairy Association

Background:

During the initial outbreak and lockdown of COVID-19, a stakeholder roundtable was held April 29, 2020 between Dairy, Pork and Poultry representatives and Minister Popham. BC Dairy raised the following issues:

1. Disruptions to BC Milk Production and Processing
 - BC Milk Marketing Board (BCMMB) implemented interim policies to reduce total milk production to reflect reduction in domestic dairy product demand due to COVID-19.
 - Pre-COVID BC milk production averaged ~2,336,000 liters/day. Dairy farmers reduced production ~40,000 liters/day or 1.7 per cent.
 - Donations of milk to B.C. food banks initially restricted the volume of raw milk that had to be dumped initially. In succeeding weeks, raw milk dumping ceased, but disposal of milk cream continued. Cream disposal to an anaerobic digester and into animal feed amount to 160,000 liters/week. Last week, the volume of cream disposed had reduced to 90,000 liters.
2. Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC) line of credit extension
 - BC Dairy Association requested Minister Popham write a letter to her federal counterparts to support the Dairy Farmers of Canada request to the Government of Canada to increase the CDC line of credit from \$200 million to \$500 million.
3. Decreased shavings (bedding) supply
 - Dairy farmers were concerned about short- and long-term supply of shavings (bedding), particularly in the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and Bulkley Valley.
 - BCDA wanted to continue working closely with MAFF to ensure an affordable and adequate supply of shavings is readily available to the dairy sector.
 - A shaving working group has since been convened to address this ongoing issue within B.C.

Discussion:

MAFF Mandate letter alignments:

- Support the work of the Minister of Education to help make sure students are properly fed for learning, working with school districts to create more local school meal programs based on district data and priorities, by integrating Feed BC into this plan so that districts can include locally grown food.
 - BC Dairy would like to discuss their role in this and opportunities for them to get involved.
- Drawing on the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, take steps to make BC a leader in food security and the emerging agri-tech sector, helping B.C. companies that are bringing innovation to agriculture grow, hire more workers and position our province as an agri-tech leader, while protecting farmland in the ALR.
 - BC Dairy Association would like to discuss the agri-tech sector its relation to dairy production within B.C.

- B.C. dairy farms are rapidly transitioning to automated (robotic) milking systems. Current estimates suggest at least 20 percent of B.C. dairy farms have switched to robotic milking.

Topics that may be raised:

On Farm Trespass - keeping farm families and animals safe from trespass

- Since 2017, there have been at least 12 documented on-farm protests and multiple other anti-farmed animal protest campaigns led by animal activist groups against the poultry, hog and dairy sectors in B.C.
- Other animal agriculture sectors such as beef, sheep, goats, horses, etc. are vulnerable to animal activist protest campaigns, but have not been explicitly targeted to date.
- The most recent pre-planned incident occurred in 2019, with over 50 protestors trespassing on land and in barns at Excelsior Hog Farm in Abbotsford, many from out of province and some from outside of Canada.
- While not all animal rights activists believe in breaking the law to support their goals, extreme actions by some animal rights groups include illegal trespass, harassment, property damage, and aggressive media attacks on individual farmers and their families.
- The Ministry of Agriculture has continued to work with industry representatives during roundtable discussions on how to address the ongoing concern of farm security for producers within B.C. This includes a focus on the following three components:
 1. **Prevention** of extreme animal activism activities (i.e. deterrence of illegal trespass, harassment, property damage, and aggressive media attacks on individual farmers and their families)
 2. **Consequences** (i.e. sufficient fines and/penalties for extreme animal activism activities)
 3. **Advocacy** for the opposing narrative (i.e. support for farmed animal agriculture and validation of good practices)
- These core values have guided the formation of a Policy Options Paper that is currently under internal review
- Members of the BC Dairy Association have been invited to participate on a industry based Steering Committee with the goal of providing input on documents designed for action and policy change

Climate change - helping farmers adapt, maintaining food security and agricultural water security

- The agriculture sector is highly vulnerable to climate change risks such as wildfire, drought, flooding, and pest outbreaks. Adaptation is required to address these risks and to take advantage of opportunities.
- Through the federal-provincial-territorial Canadian Agricultural Partnership, AFF is funding an industry-led adaptation program delivered by the BC Climate & Agriculture Initiative (CAI). This program increases the capacity of BC farmers to adapt to climate change through the development and implementation of regional adaptation strategies in eight key agricultural areas of B.C. and providing support for the piloting and demonstration of innovative adaptation practices on B.C. farms and ranches.
- In 2018, CAI completed a scan of technologies and practices for minimizing extreme heat impacts to dairy production in the Fraser Valley and identified potential steps to enhance information and/or adopt the most promising options.
- CAI, with local government and agricultural partners including BC Dairy, continues to develop and mobilize regional and farm-level appropriate knowledge and innovation to secure agricultural water. Notable projects include:

- Fraser Valley Agricultural Water Supply Assessment: aims to summarize existing agricultural water supply challenges and knowledge gaps and identifying key areas vulnerable to climate change impacts.
- Farm-Level Flood Mitigation, Preparedness & Recovery Toolkit: developed a flood-readiness toolkit, including fact sheets and worksheets, for BC producers to strengthen their farm-level preparedness and resilience to impacts associated with flooding.

Contact: Tom Droppo, Dairy and Pork Industry Specialist, 250.737.2565
Taylor Jeffery, Livestock Technician, s.17

ED MR ADM AL DM TE