



December 12, 2024

Hon. Tamara Davidson
Minister of Environment and Parks
Government of British Columbia
PO Box 9047 Stn Prov Gov
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Hon. Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

VIA EMAIL: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca; Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca

Re: TFN Support for a Long-Term Strategic Local Channel Dredging Plan and Program in the Lower Fraser River

ʔəy'sweyal (Good day) Minister Davidson and Minister Guilbeault,

In June 2021, a joint letter was sent to Prime Minister Trudeau and BC Premier Horgan from Chief Baird (TFN), Chief Sparrow (Musqueam), Mayor Harvey (City of Delta), and Mayor Brodie (City of Richmond) on local channel dredging in the Lower Fraser River. As elected leaders of our respective communities, we wrote to both levels of government calling for collaborative action to resolve the long-standing problem of sediment in the Lower Fraser River impacting our communities, and the need for a long-term, sustainable, strategic plan and program for local channel dredging in the area to mitigate the environmental, social, rights, and economic impacts that would benefit stakeholders alike. We asked that both levels of government collaboratively commit to developing and implementing a strategic plan for local channel dredging in the Lower Fraser River that would include a regular maintenance dredging program of all local channels. A copy of that letter is enclosed for your reference.

TFN recently met with representatives of The South Fraser River Enhancement Society (formerly Ladner Sediment Group) ("SFRES"). As fellow stakeholders in the dredging initiative, we discussed our shared concern that a long-term sustainable solution to the dredging matter subject of the July 2021 letter remains unmet. SFRES also apprised TFN of its meeting this November, following the provincial election, with BC's Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship ("WALRUS"), sharing its intention to raise the matter with the new government elect. TFN has encouraged SFRES to pursue the issue at that meeting.

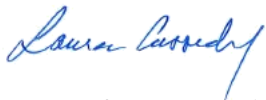
As a modern treaty nation of the Lower Fraser with treaty interests and rights implicated in the dredging matter, TFN is a key stakeholder on this issue. The Fraser River is of critical importance to the Tsawwassen Nation and to the Tsawwassen People – as Salmon People, fishing the Fraser is deeply woven in our Nation's history, traditions, and culture, and reflected in our rights enshrined in our modern day treaty agreement with you, our treaty partners, Canada and British Columbia.

Fraser River salmon, sturgeon, and eulachon stocks are dangerously low, and the secondary channels of the Lower Fraser are important feeding and sheltering areas for juvenile salmon. It is important that water flow is maintained through regular maintenance dredging in the secondary channels to ensure the health and well-being of TFN's Fish and Water relations for seven generations, which as stewards, is our responsibility to ensure. The problem of sediment build-up also impacts the ability of our fishers to access, safely, the navigation channels to our preferred fishing areas in the Lower Fraser, particularly Canoe Pass area during low tide and Ladner Harbour. A dredging plan and program is a necessary component to ensure the health and wellbeing of the Lower Fraser River and to ensure TFN's rights, responsibilities, and traditions.

The purpose of this letter to both provincial and federal governments is to reaffirm TFN's position on the dredging matter captured in the 2021 letter, and to ask both government directly, as partners in treaty, to collaboratively commit to develop and implement a long-term, sustainable strategic plan for local channel dredging in the Lower Fraser River that includes a regular maintenance dredging program of all secondary channels.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to discussing how TFN can work together with your governments on a collaborative dredging initiative.

ciθamə cən (I thank you),



Chief Laura Cassidy
Tsawwassen First Nation
lcassidy@tsawwassenfirstnation.com

cc.

Executive Council, TFN
Kwuntiltunaat, Kim Baird, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, TFN
Sheila Williams, Manager, Treaty Rights and Title Department, TFN
Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, BC Government
Peter Xotta, President and CEO, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority
Simon Everatt, President, South Fraser River Enhancement Society
George Harvey, Mayor, City of Delta
Malcolm Brodie, Mayor, City of Richmond
Wayne Sparrow, Chief, Musqueam Nation

Enclosures: Enclosure 1 - Joint Letter to PM and Premier (2021)