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May 28th, 2025

Honourable Joanne Thompson, M.P., P.C.

Minister of Fisheries, Canada

200 Kent Street, Station 15N100 Ottawa, ON, K1A 0E6

[min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Thompson:

**Re: 2025 Yukon River and Porcupine River Drainage Chinook and Chum Salmon Allocation Recommendations**

The Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee (YSSC) is hereby providing our recommendation for Yukon River and Porcupine River allocations for the 2025 season, pursuant to our mandate under Chapter 16 and provision 16.7.17.12 (f) of Yukon First Nation Final Agreements. Considering the continued historic low runs experienced for both Chinook and chum salmon over recent years, the projected low 2025 abundance, and the seven-year agreement regarding Canadian-origin Yukon River Chinook Salmon (effective April 2024), **we recommend no subsistence, no commercial, no domestic and no recreational allocation of any Yukon River and Porcupine River Chinook and chum salmon in 2025.**

The seven-year agreement signed between Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game commits the parties to a rebuilding target of 71,000 (international border passage). The Joint Technical Committee of the Yukon River Panel is estimating that the 2025 return of Yukon River and Porcupine River Canadian-origin Chinook Salmon across the border to be between 12,000 – 32,000.

Similarly, the outlook for Yukon River chum salmon is dire. The 2025 Yukon River mainstem return is forecasted to be between 8,000 and 48,000 fish, with the 2025 Fishing Branch return between 5,000 – 13,000; figures that fall well below the established spawning goals. If these estimates hold true, this continues the trend of critically low runs and moves closer to placing these Yukon River salmon on the brink of extinction.

In response, YSSC remains firmly committed to long-term domestic and international rebuilding plans for Canadian-origin Yukon River Chinook salmon, in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and other key partners. Given the current projections for chum salmon, we urge DFO to initiate a rebuilding process for chum populations that mirrors the urgency and strategic planning already underway for Chinook.



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We acknowledge that Yukon First Nations (YFNs) manage their own fisheries, and that their subsistence fishery holds the highest priority under both the Yukon First Nations Final Agreements and the Yukon River Salmon Agreement. For decades, YFN's have led by example in conservation and stewardship of Yukon salmon. In response to declining salmon runs, many communities have adapted by purchasing salmon, relying on other freshwater species, investing in habitat and stock restoration and continuing to keep important cultural traditions alive through fish camps and ceremony. Choosing not to fish, even when entitled to do so, places a significant burden on YFN's – impacting food security and eroding vital cultural traditions tied to salmon. As more information on run sizes becomes available, we look forward to engaging with YFN's on their right to a cultural harvest, as stated in the seven-year agreement.

In these uncertain times—particularly given the current U.S. administration—it is more important than ever that DFO demonstrates leadership by reinforcing its support for rebuilding initiatives. We urge the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada to continue its commitment to reconciliation and the rebuilding plan by supporting the preservation of salmon culture through tangible measures. These include ongoing financial investments, such as those made under the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative. Given that the spawning grounds of these keystone species are found in the Yukon, we request that the Yukon receives an equitable allocation of resources comparable to what is provided to British Columbia.

In closing, we thank you in advance for your support with our recommendation, noting your obligations under section 16.8.4 of Yukon First Nation Final Agreements. Should you require further information or clarification, please contact myself or Taylor Bradley, Executive Director of the Yukon Salmon Sub-Committee. We look forward to receiving your response and remain committed to working with YFNs, DFO, Government of Yukon, Renewable Resources Councils, stakeholders, and all Yukoners to steward, restore and protect Yukon salmon and their habitats.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth MacDonald', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Elizabeth MacDonald

Vice Chair, YSSC

CC:

Steve Gotch, Senior Director, Operations, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific Region

Bill Waugh, Director, Yukon Transboundary Rivers Area, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Cathy Merkel, Manager Treaty Implementation and Indigenous Programming, Fisheries and Oceans Canada