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The Honourable Herb Dhaliwal  
Minister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
House of Commons  
Parliament Building, Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Dhaliwal:

In May 2000, the Institute for Dispute Resolution at the University of Victoria was appointed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to conduct an Independent Review of Improved Decision-Making in the Pacific salmon fishery. One year later, the Review is now complete and the Institute is looking forward to the response of the federal government and all interested groups and individuals to the recommendations contained in this Final Report.

The aim of the Independent Review was to stimulate dialogue on key consultation issues among a wide range of government and stakeholder groups, including Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the provincial government, local governments, First Nations, commercial fishers and processors, recreational fishers, community associations, environmental organizations, and academics. A starting point for dialogue was the discussion paper prepared by Fisheries and Oceans Canada entitled "A Framework for Improved Decision-Making in the Pacific Salmon Fishery". Three aspects of the Pacific salmon consultation process were identified as the focus for the Independent Review:

- Annual salmon harvest management planning;
- Implementation issues associated with the Pacific Allocation and Licensing Board; and
- The policy development process for issues related to salmon fisheries management.

The Review also addressed broader questions relating to the fundamentals of meaningful consultation processes, community involvement and area-based management, and aboriginal and treaty rights.

With respect to this latter focus, it is important to note that although the Institute met with First Nations over the course of the Independent Review, these meetings were not consultations with First Nations in the legal sense. The objectives of the meetings were instead to exchange

information and provide an opportunity for First Nations organizations to consider their involvement with other parties in a multi-party environment. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will still fulfill its legal obligations to formally consult with First Nations on elements of this Report through a process agreed to by both parties.

This report is the final product of a three phase process that included preliminary discussions and background research (May – September 2000), extensive community and sector-specific consultations (October 2000 – March 2001), and the publication and feedback on the Review Team’s preliminary recommendations (April 2001). Over the course of the Independent Review, the Review Team held 71 meetings with interested government and stakeholder groups (nine of these meetings were information exchange meetings with First Nations organizations), and conducted 14 public meetings in communities where fisheries issues are important. In addition, 24 individuals and groups made formal written submissions, 18 individuals submitted comments by phone and nine submitted comments by mail and email. In total, the Institute met with and/or talked to well over 350 individuals and organizations with an interest in the salmon industry.

The Institute for Dispute Resolution would like to acknowledge that this level of participation would not have been possible without a substantial amount of thought and effort from those who contributed to the Independent Review. We appreciate this participation, especially in the face of the numerous other demands on people’s time and attention. Reviews of this sort, and their successful implementation, rely upon the continued engagement of all parties.

The Institute for Dispute Resolution would also like to thank Fisheries and Oceans Canada for its coordinating role and its direct participation in the Independent Review.

We hope that both the process of conducting the Independent Review and the recommendations and comments provided in this Final Report will contribute positively to improved decision making in the Pacific salmon fishery. We recognize that this Report is only a starting point, and we urge all parties to consider their respective roles in moving toward improved consultation processes.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by Maureen Maloney