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April 23, 2020

Laura Watson
WA Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Re: Raising native species in WA waters – marine net pen permits

Dear Director Watson,

I write regarding the permit modification application under consideration by Washington Department of Ecology (ECY) for four Puget Sound net pens – three in Rich Passage in Kitsap County and one near Hope Island in Skagit County, to revise the National Pollution Discharge Elimination permit for these facilities to raise native steelhead trout instead of non-native Atlantic Salmon.

Our Tribe has an interest in this matter because modern aquaculture could enable Tribes to continue our traditions, feed our families, and provide fish and shellfish to others. Even as we maintain and rebuild our wild fisheries, we cannot meet increasing domestic demand for seafood through wild-caught fisheries alone. Knowing the origins of seafood is central to assuring its healthy benefits. To this end, Jamestown is exploring modern net pen aquaculture opportunities in Port Angeles Harbor, Clallam County. Permit decisions made for the four facilities under current ECY review will have direct bearing on Port Angeles rearing as well.

As we are confident you understand that fin and shellfish have always been an integral part of S'Klallam culture, as sustenance as well as for the traditions associated with harvest, preparation and celebration. For millennia, S'Klallam people fed their families with fin and shellfish, and traded their abundant harvest with other Tribes, devising methods for holding fresh catch, and preserving the harvest for future consumption. When explorers, and then settlers arrived on this land, S'Klallam people bartered and sold their familiar harvests to them. Market demand grew with the increasing European population, and S'Klallam fishermen discovered a new market for their traditional foods.

As a sovereign nation, our Tribe has always cherished and protected our treaty rights as well as our right to pursue economic development, both of which contribute to our self-reliance and our ability to thrive as a people and a culture. The 21st century has brought new challenges to exercising our treaty rights - if there are no fish to harvest, how can we access our treaty resources?

JST has two parallel goals in everything we do – to continue to be stewards of our traditional homelands so that we can continue to fish, hunt and gather our treaty

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resources; and to generate revenue to fund programs and services to our Tribal citizens. In the process of both objectives, we have provided significant benefit to the larger community in terms of the local environment, and local employment.

We acknowledge there is still a high level of skepticism regarding saltwater fish pen operations since the 2017 collapse of a net pen containing Atlantic salmon near Cypress Island in Skagit County. We firmly believe that confidence will be restored. Permit materials currently under review by ECY’s demonstrate clear environmental protection practices and increased monitoring, inspections and reporting; as well as clear preparedness for accidents.

An ongoing cultural identity of Jamestown Tribe includes stewardship of our seafood resources. Further, JST strives for excellence and environmental integrity in all of its endeavors. We have firm plans to pursue net pen aquaculture as other tribes including the Colville Confederated Tribes, Suquamish and Muckleshoot are doing today. This opportunity will enable JST to continue our traditions, feed our families, and provide jobs, fish and shellfish to our neighboring communities.

Any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our staff.

Sincerely,



W. Ron Allen
Chair/ CEO

Cc: Laurie Niewolmy, ECY Water Quality Program
Tyson Hawk Oreiro, ECY Tribal Affairs
David Postman, Governor’s Office