



*Thomas Mulcair, Député/M.P.  
Outremont*

OTTAWA  
October 10, 2013

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street, Langevin Block  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

On the west coast of Vancouver Island, Five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations are seeking a negotiated settlement with your Government concerning fishing rights in their communities following the 2009 ruling of the British Columbia Supreme Court, upheld by the British Columbia Court of Appeal in 2011 and again in 2013.

The BC courts ordered that the Government of Canada and the Nuu-chah-nulth engage in a consultation process and negotiate how the Nuu-chah-nulth's constitutional rights to fish and sell should be implemented.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has thus far failed to implement the courts' decisions and to accommodate the constitutional rights of these Nuu-chah-nulth Nations. This is a serious matter with significant implications for the Nuu-chah-nulth, who face considerable poverty in their communities and the continued erosion of their fishing culture.

I urge you to direct your attention to this matter and to ensure that officials in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are given the proper mandate to implement the courts' decisions, and respect the constitutional rights of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations in order to support the local economies of the West Coast of Vancouver Island. I also strongly urge you to reconsider the decision to seek leave to appeal the lower court decisions to the Supreme Court of Canada. Recognizing and accommodating the rights of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations is the path forward toward reconciliation and prosperity for all.

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Canada needs to build a new relationship with Aboriginal peoples. Continuing to fight their claims through costly court battles is not the way forward. The situation of the Nuu-chah-nulth presents an opportunity for the Government of Canada to embrace a new approach in its dealings with Aboriginal peoples, I urge you to take it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Mulcair". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair, P.C. M.P.  
Leader of the Official Opposition  
New Democratic Party Of Canada