



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas expresses disappointment with the Interlocutor report on future transformation of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Grand Chief Arlen Dumas issues this statement in response to today's release of the federal Interlocutor report on the future transformation of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC). The Department of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast (DFO) Minister, the Honourable Bernadette Jordan, received the report today from Kevin Anderson and issued a press release. The report's key recommendation to the DFO is that the Department continue to work with and provide additional financing to, the Interim Committee of Inland Fish Harvesters, so that it may conduct due diligence and form a Co-op of fish harvesters to transform the FFMC.

"My initial reaction to the report is one of disappointment," said AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas. "It is particularly disappointing given that the AMC was provided with assurances that our proposal would be given all due consideration as a viable transformation plan for the FFMC. It appears with the release of this report that the AMC was misled. The AMC Executive Council of Chiefs directed the Assembly to explore First Nations' options for transfer of ownership and operation of the FFMC to a First Nations-led entity. Over the last three and a half years, we have worked tirelessly toward this goal by establishing a team of very experienced fisheries executives, industry experts and a consortium of inland fishers in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the NWT to develop a comprehensive proposal to present to the federal Interlocutor and the Interim Committee, which he established in his role as Interlocutor, and which we have continued to improve with ongoing input with stakeholders. The AMC has dedicated extensive resources to the FFMC transformation process."

Grand Chief Dumas went on to state, "I acknowledge the Interlocutor's findings that, *'First Nations groups were concerned with maintaining and respecting Section 35 fishing rights.'* I take particular issue, however, with the finding that the AMC proposal *'lacked sufficient information.'* I would like to know what this lack of information was because the proposal we presented to Mr. Anderson and the Interim Committee last summer was and is very comprehensive, including a detailed due diligence and risk analysis process. As I have shared with many provincial and federal ministers over the last few years, our proposal is backed by First Nations leadership in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the NWT as a shovel-ready process for implementing the Treaty right to fish; it is inclusive of all inland fisheries, while at the same time ensuring that Section 35 fishing rights are respected and maintained."

"The Indigenous Freshwater Fish Marketing Limited Partnership remains a shovel-ready proposal for federal funding for a First Nations-led process for transformation of the FFMC. I look forward to ongoing discussions with the DFO and its Interim Committee on how the Treaty right to fish in Manitoba for a moderate livelihood is supported and advanced through the recommendations contained in the federal Interlocutor's report," concluded Grand Chief Dumas.

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.