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MHC-Kwakiutl Agreement Release
For Immediate Release
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Kwakiutl First Nation & Marine Harvest Canada sign Agreement that brings economic opportunity for community

Port Hardy, BC. Marine Harvest Canada (MHC) and the Kwakiutl First Nation (KFC) have rejuvenated support for an Agreement that will see economic capacity building and employment and training opportunities provided to the Kwakiutl people by BC's largest aquaculture company.

In return, the Kwakiutl First Nation agrees to support MHC operations—four salmon farms, two freshwater hatcheries, and a processing plant—in their traditional territory.

"In 2000 we signed an Agreement with Omega Seafood, which later became Marine Harvest Canada," notes Kwakiutl First Nations Chief Verna Chartrand. "But due to company mergers and changes in Band leadership we stopped communicating. The Agreement was really only paper and didn't help nurture a relationship between us, so we met to discuss our needs. By making some changes to the existing agreement, we have now created benefits for both company and Nation."

"Our community looks forward to the economic opportunities that will come from this," says Chief Chartrand. "We have also satisfied ourselves that Marine Harvest operates sustainably in our traditional territory and will keep doing its utmost to protect the marine environment that is so important to us."

"The support of the Kwakiutl people is very important to our northern Vancouver Island operations," says Vincent Erenst, Managing Director at Marine Harvest Canada. "We look forward to deepening the involvement of the Kwakiutl people in our operations and to their ongoing input to and support for our farms and facilities."

"This agreement shows how businesses and aboriginal communities can work together to build relationships and help one another," said John Duncan, Member of Parliament for Vancouver Island North. "When communities work together, everyone benefits."

Many of the Kwakiutl First Nation's 650 members live in Fort Rupert on northern Vancouver Island near Port Hardy. The Nation's traditional territory covers an area of 197,000 ha from the Nahwitti River at the north to the Nimpkish River at the south.

Marine Harvest Canada is BC's largest aquaculture company and the largest private sector employer on the north half of Vancouver Island with a workforce of 530. In 2008 the company produced 40,000 tonnes of fresh, high quality farmed Atlantic salmon for export to customers in the United States, Asia, and Canada.

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