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3/7/18

Mr. Gareth Manderson
General Manager, BC Works – Rio Tinto
PO Box 1 800, 1 Smeltersite Road
Kitimat, British Columbia
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JUN 15 2018

Dear Mr. Manderson,

I would like to congratulate Rio Tinto on the launch of the Focused Water Engagement Initiative with the communities of the Nechako Watershed. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) intends to participate in the engagement initiative to ensure the protection of fish and fish habitat and suggest potential ways in which fish and fish habitat may be enhanced. DFO is optimistic that the initiative will be able to address the concerns of the communities in the Nechako watershed.

Beyond the engagement initiative, DFO will continue to work with you under the terms of the 1987 Settlement Agreement to ensure that flows in the Nechako River continue to protect and conserve salmon.

My department welcomes efforts to manage water flows in a manner which increases the protection and preservation of White Sturgeon and its critical habitat. The Nechako White Sturgeon Technical Working Group is an appropriate forum for continuing such discussions with representatives from the Province of British Columbia and Indigenous groups. As such, DFO will continue to work with Rio Tinto, the Province, Indigenous groups and stakeholders to ensure that the restoration of the Nechako White Sturgeon population includes the consideration of water flow management.

It is important to manage the Nechako Reservoir and Nechako River flows for multiple and diverse interests. DFO supports efforts to address community interests such as flood prevention while simultaneously ensuring the protection of fish and fish habitat, including aquatic species at risk and their critical habitat.

DFO looks forward to continuing these discussions on water flows through the Focused Water Engagement Initiative and continued works as part of the Nechako White Sturgeon Technical Working Group. I am optimistic that these initiatives can lead to changes in water management for the Nechako River that address risks to public safety, property, and fisheries resources.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

c.c.: Mr. Todd Doherty, M.P. Cariboo – Prince George
Mr. Gerry Thiessen, Mayor, Vanderhoof, British Columbia