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September 17, 2020

TO ALL ESKASONI COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

As most of our community members are aware, September 17th marks the anniversary of the day that Donald Marshall Jr. was acquitted for fishing for eels out of season and selling them to aid in his livelihood. The ruling from the Supreme court of Canada stated that based on the Peace and Friendship Treaties of 1760-61, the Mi'kmaq have a right to fish for a moderate livelihood.

It has been 21 years and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans haven't addressed the right to a moderate livelihood fishery to date. We have been sitting at many tables with various groups over the past number of years trying to find a common ground and we haven't reached a conclusion on what we feel should be considered our right to a "moderate livelihood".

Even though the highest courts in the land "The Supreme Court of Canada" have said that we have that right, our people are being harassed while taking part in this fishery by the non-indigenous fishermen, with no support from the DFO and RCMP officers.

I just want to make it clear that the Eskasoni Chief and Council have not signed any agreements regarding the right to a moderate livelihood and will not sign a moderate livelihood agreement until we reach out to our community members and community fishers for their valued input. Once this has been discussed and determined, we can then move forward with negotiations as well as developing our own plan for a moderate livelihood. Msit No'kmaq.

Chief Leroy Denny and Council
Eskasoni First Nation