Indigenous-led Cumulative Effects & Bridging the Informational Gap for Informed Decision Making

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THE PROBLEM WITH “CUMULATIVE EFFECTS” & THE PATH FORWARD

THE PROBLEM:
Environmental Assessments (EAs) lack baseline and cumulative data upon which to effectively gauge impacts. “Cumulative Effects” is a catch-all term that lacks tangible measurements and its definition is inconsistent. Data and scoping in EAs are dictated solely by regulatory checklists and proponent data specific to Projects. Indigenous perspectives, concerns and priorities are not properly addressed within the “cumulative effects” of Environmental Assessments even though impacts occur on their Traditional Territories. Interconnectedness is not addressed.

THE PATH FORWARD:
It is important that Indigenous perspectives, culture, history, and priorities be factored into the definition of “cumulative effects” and the scoping of impacts. Cumulative Effects should be redefined, and data should be gathered in a way that incorporates a holistic approach with western science. Only then can we bridge the gaps and move forward effectively with regulator assessments.

Salish Sea Indigenous Guardians Association
Established in 2021

Objective
Implement a holistic, Indigenous-led, cumulative effects framework for the Salish Sea.

Nation Concerns
- Harvesting Closures
- Pollution
- Lack of Indigenous Involvement
- Cultural Impacts
- Climate Change
- Water Quality
- Declining Salmon Numbers
- Reconciliation
- Marine Shipping
- Long-Term Work
- Emergency Response
- Invasive Species
- Aquaculture
- Knowledge Transfer to Youth
- Access to Safe & Healthy Traditional Foods
- Urbanization
- Flooding Events

2021-2022 Achievements
1. Community meetings
2. Interviews with elders
3. Centralized and accessible SSIGA data atlas
4. Monitoring programs for bivalves, water quality, salmon, and crab

Next Steps
- Continue community meetings, elder interviews, and knowledge sharing
- Training SSIGA Nation members
- Alongside member Nations, collect data and implement monitoring programs
- Continue to build and expand the SSIGA data atlas
- Develop indigenous-led “cumulative effects” definitions, policy, and process

“...historically, traditionally, culturally, salmon was our main staple.”

“Everything that’s around us has life and has purpose and that’s how we look at things and we have to put our part in to protect and take care of, you know, the things that take care of us in a good way.”

* The fish, that river [Fraser], and its tributaries are the bloodline of our people *

“Death by 1000 cuts”