

**Chilliwack Progress**

# Yale treaty 'fatal blow' to Fraser inquiry, MP says

By [Robert Freeman - Chilliwack Progress](#)

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Conservative MP John Cummins has come out swinging against his own government's proposed treaty with the Yale First Nation.

He said the agreement initialled Friday in Yale could be a "fatal blow" to a federal inquiry called recently into Fraser River fisheries management.

"At the very moment that the judicial inquiry is set to undertake a groundbreaking evaluation and assessment of fisheries management," Cummins said in a news release, "the Minister of Indian Affairs signs a treaty to transfer fisheries management authority to the Yale Indian Band."

Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl did not return a call for his comment Monday.

Cummins said BC fishermen are looking to the inquiry as "their last chance to inject common sense into fisheries management."

"Many will now conclude that the Yale Final Agreement, which expands native fishing in the Fraser Canyon and places it in constitutional cement, together with other treaties in the pipeline, will interfere with or limit Justice (Bruce) Cohen's work," he said.

"With the signing of the (Yale) treaty fishermen believe the government has made clear its intention to continue the very fisheries management practices that have devastated the Fraser sockeye fishery."

The judicial inquiry into the decline of Fraser River sockeye for the third season in a row was called last November.

More than nine million sockeye were predicted in preseason forecasts, but just over one million arrived.

A final inquiry report is expected in May, 2011.

Cummins said the Yale treaty will "compromise every conceivable aspect of fisheries management, from monitoring and enforcement to who will have access to Fraser River

sockeye."

He said the treaty deals with the same issues that the Cohen inquiry must address, "and will move them behind a constitutional wall where neither the inquiry's investigation nor final recommendations can touch them."

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