



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 13, 2020**

### **Port Alberni Food Hub Opens to Seafood Processors**

In partnership with the City of Port Alberni, with funding support from the Province of British Columbia and Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET), the Port Alberni Port Authority (PAPA) is pleased to announce the opening of the new Port Alberni Food Hub to its seafood processors.

Following months of renovations to the Port's owned former fish processing plant, thanks to the dedication and diligence by the construction contractors through COVID-19, the new food hub facility is open to its anchor tenants who process seafood. Flurer Smokery, Cascadia Seaweed, Nova Harvest Oysters and Canadian Seafood Processing (Effingham Oysters) are excited to move into their own respective areas within the food hub to start processing. A fifth anchor tenant, Forest For Dinner, which processes land-based wild grown food products, is expected to move in soon.

"This marks the beginning of achieving a great vision shared by the Port, the City, ICET, the Province and the community," according to PAPA President & CEO, Zoran Knezevic. "After years of relationship-building, networking and creating a vision to support the development and growth of the local seafood sector, we are excited to see these finfish, shellfish and seaweed processors move in to create local food products and new jobs." These sentiments are echoed by the City of Port Alberni's Manager of Economic Development, Pat Deakin: "This is a legacy project in that it will address food safety, security and supply matters for many years to come and we are exceedingly grateful to the agencies and organizations who have worked together to make this a reality."

"Port Alberni's food and beverage processing sector is full of opportunity for growth, and this hub will help fishers, seafood producers and farmers in the area build their businesses and the community," said Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture. "Our government is proud to support economic development in the Alberni Valley and having a centralized location to help food businesses grow will create jobs and generate economic activity as we restart B.C.'s economy."

"For the people of Port Alberni, the development of a food hub in our city means more opportunities for locals and economic growth for our city," said Scott Fraser, MLA for Mid Island-Pacific Rim. "Our fishers, harvesters, farmers and processors will be able to keep the processing of their products here in the Port, which will help businesses increase product value and revenues while employing more people in the community."

"Supporting growth in the region's agri-food industry is a key priority for us," says ICET Chief Executive Officer, Line Robert. "The Alberni Valley Food Hub is an example of collaboration and innovation that will allow local producers to scale up their business opportunities and attract new food producers helping to strengthen our regional food supply chain."

PORT ALBERNI PORT AUTHORITY  
2750 Harbour Road  
Port Alberni, BC V9Y 7X2  
Tel. (250) 723-5312 Fax. (250) 723-1114  
www.portalberniportauthority.ca



ADMINISTRATION PORTUAIRE DE PORT ALBERNI  
2750 Harbour Road  
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Work continues towards completion of the shared commercial kitchen space that will further support local food security, sustainability, growth, processing and incubator opportunities for individuals, small businesses and community organizations. We look forward to providing information about how the community can use this upcoming portion of the food hub in the near future.

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For More Information Contact:

Dave McCormick, Director of Public Relations & Business Development  
250-723-5312 ext. 227