



Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance
#213 – 46693 Yale Road
Chilliwack, BC V2P 7Z4

April 5, 2018

Open Letter to Premier John Horgan

Subject: A Jobs-centered Solution – Move Aquaculture to Closed Containment

Dear Premier Horgan,

We are all concerned about a healthy, stable economy that creates jobs and prosperity for British Columbians. This, however, cannot be accomplished by supporting one sector of the economy at the expense of another. A growing number of voters are convinced that cumulative evidence, including peer-reviewed science, and recent legal decisions, clearly reveal that the ocean salmon farming industry poses threats of irreversible harm to wild salmon, which have been recommended for inclusion on the endangered species list by the Committee for the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Wild salmon economic sectors - sports fisheries, commercial fisheries and eco-tourism - support many more jobs than the open net pen fish farm industry. As you must appreciate, every effort must be taken to ensure wild salmon are restored to large numbers for the welfare of the numerous species that depend on them for their survival. The Musgamagw, Namgis and Mamalillikulla Nations have made it abundantly clear over many years that they have irrefutable evidence their food resources, wild salmon and herring, are collapsing around fish farms in their territorial waters. Fraser River First Nations are in solidarity with them as they are experiencing great hardship due to record low salmon returns.

The Norwegian corporations keep saying that it is not economically feasible to move salmon farms onto land in containment, yet this is precisely what is happening in other parts of the world because of the inherent unsustainability of open net pen technology. It is impossible to quarantine farmed Atlantic salmon in Pacific waters during contagious disease and virus outbreaks in those pens. Our oceans are already over polluted and we simply cannot use our Pacific coast as a sewer, yet that is exactly what open net pens do by releasing tons of untreated waste into the ocean. This industry continues to leave their floodlights on at night, drawing wild salmon smolts and endangered herring into their nets to become food for farmed fish. **PRV-contaminated** blood water from fish farm processing plant pipes were not shut off as a precautionary measure before proceeding with the investigation into the blood water pouring into migration routes of wild salmon. This situation puts wild salmon at further risk of irreversible harm as scientific evidence shows PVR causes HSMI and is highly contagious. The blood water was also found to have an enterococcus bacteria that may be harmful to humans. The Canadian regulatory regime is failing to defend wild salmon from this government-subsidized industry. The Honourable Justice Manson stated in a recent decision that Minister Dominic LeBlanc's handling of piscine reovirus in farmed salmon constitutes a serious threat of irreparable harm!

The aquaculture industry created ZERO jobs in Echo Bay. In fact, when the ocean fish farm industry showed up, the former Liberal provincial government took away local residents' right to tie their floathouses to the shore and gave the tenures to the Norwegians. They put salmon farms on top of the best rock cod, prawn and salmon fishing areas and the local people lost their livelihoods - no compensation, no reduction in license fees - nothing. When enough people left Echo Bay, the province of B.C. burnt down the school, all the while saying salmon farming is good for small coastal communities. Sadly, there are only eight people left in Echo Bay and 23 salmon farms run by people who don't live there. There are no processing plants left in Sointula and Alert Bay, and hundreds of jobs have been sacrificed. This is business as usual for these companies, who have caused the same damage everywhere they go (Ford & Myers 2008). So, millionaires in other countries make massive profits at devastating expense to the B.C. economy, by killing wild salmon and herring, and the job-generating wild salmon economy.

We propose that your government choose to go down the same path as Alaska, Oregon, California, and Washington State and outlaw/phase out the open net pen fish farm industry, starting with not renewing the fish farm tenures in the Broughton Archipelago when they expire on June 20, 2018. The Indigenous Nations mentioned above, and all those who have endorsed this letter would see this as respecting their Indigenous rights and responsibility of stewarding their food fish resource, and this would be greeted as an important step on the road to reconciliation. Such a decision would protect the many jobs in the wild salmon economy and stimulate land-based aquaculture in closed containment, creating long-term meaningful jobs. We encourage the Norwegian companies to move in this direction, but if they continue to be unwilling, it is an opportunity for other investors to take advantage of the economic opportunity to take leadership in establishing economically sustainable land-based aquaculture in B.C. This is a win-win solution that protects the best interests of the economy, wild salmon, good partnership relations with USA neighbors, the aquaculture industry and the health of humans. A recent announcement to build a large land-based aquaculture facility in Belfast, Maine speaks to the economic viability of land-based farms. <https://www.pressherald.com/2018/01/30/norwegian-company-to-build-large-land-based-salmon-farm-in-belfast/>. The transition to land-based aquaculture is underway. B.C. is currently missing this opportunity, yet it is the solution to this situation.

The month of June is fast approaching when the fish farm tenures in question are up for renewal. You like to remind people that the federal government has 90% jurisdiction over fin fish aquaculture. This leaves the B.C provincial government with 10% of the jurisdiction, which includes the power whether or not to renew fish farm tenures. We are asking you to let the public know your government will choose to be a champion of wild salmon and not renew those fish farm tenures. Please know you will have the support of voters across the province if fish farm tenures are not renewed.

We look forward to hearing from you soon on your decision regarding fish farm tenures.

Eddie Gardner, President, Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance

Endorsements:

Chief Don Svanvik, Namgis First Nation
 Chief Alice McKay, Matsqui First Nation
 Grand Chief Stewart Phillips, President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs
 Chief Bob Chamberlin, First Nations Wild Salmon Alliance
 Chief Judy Wilson, Skat'sin te Secwepemc, Neslonlith
 Chief Michelle Lee Edwards, Sekw'el'was (Cayoos Creek Band)
 Chief Robert Gladstone, Shxwhá:y Village, Chilliwack
 Chief Robert Combes, Skwah First Nation, Chilliwack
 Les Antone, Kwantlen
 Brandon and Melinda Gabrielle, Stand With Kwantlen
 Dawn, Morrison, Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty (WGIFS)
 Dr. David Suzuki, Scientist
 Aaron Hill, Executive Director, Watershed Watch Salmon Society
 Dean Werk, Owner & Professional Guide, Great River Fishing Adventures
 Nick Basok, Vice-President/Chris Gadsden, Treasurer, Fraser Valley Salmon Society
 Scott and Nina Bonner, Alert Bay Lodge (alertbaylodge.com.)
 Suzy Coulter, Chilliwack Chapter of the Council of Canadians
 Barbara Michell-Pollock, Co-Chair, of the Council of Canadians, Victoria Chapter
 Howard Breen, Executive Director, Urgent Climate and Ocean Rapid Response (CORR)
 Alexandra Morton, Independent Biologist
 Kurt Beardslee, Executive Director, Wild Fish Conservancy Northwest, Washington
 Sue Andrews, Local Group Organizer, Greenpeace, Victoria
 J Ocean Dennie, Indigenous Solidarity Working Group

Claire Gilmore, Managing Editor, Watershed Sentinel, Comox, BC
 Dianne Crosbie, Northwest Wilderness Society Camp on Kootenay Lake
 Tara Bonham, member of the Environment Committee of the United Church of Vancouver
 Tracy Lyster, Editor & Don Mair, Footprint Press, Mission, BC
 Frank Superneault and Angela Brady, Medicine Wheel Facilitators, Chilliwack, BC
 Robert Hornsey, Sustainable Community Development Consultants, Maple Ridge, BC
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 Gary Haggquist (Forest Echoes Cabins, Cultus Lake, BC)
 Michael Gildersleeve and Hilde Tonkins, Mission, BC
 Jay Peachy, JPeachy Gallery, Powell Street, Vancouver BC
 Rob Dramer and Lillian Ireland, Maple Ridge, Members of Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance
 David Peters and Chelsey Peters, Seabird Island, BC
 Yvette John, Chawathil First Nation
 Jackie Cambell, Maple Ridge
 Hereditary Chief George Quocksister Jr. of Laichwiltach Nation

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The Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture
 The Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
 The Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
 The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture
 The Honourable Claire Trevena, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
 Dr. Andrew Weaver, MLA OakBay-Gordon Head & Leader of the BC Green Party
 Honourable Melanie Mark
 Honourable David Eby

Honourable Katrine Conroy
Honourable Katrina Chen
Honourable Jinny Sims
Honourable Rob Fleming
Honourable Michelle Mungall
Honourable Carole James
Honourable Doug Donaldson
Honourable Adrian Dix
Honourable Bruce Ralston
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