



Media Release

Cohen Commission Countdown

30 witnesses over 12 days to testify during hearings on salmon 'Diseases' & 'Aquaculture'

Echo Bay, B.C., August 8th, 2011 – The Cohen Commission has posted its list of witnesses (<http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/Schedule/>) for the evidentiary hearings on 'Diseases' (August 22 – 24) and 'Aquaculture' (August 25 – September 8).

Dr. Kristi Miller – the DFO scientist “muzzled” by the Privy Council and the Harper Government – will testify on August 24. Dr. Alexandra Morton, Executive Director of Raincoast Research Society, will appear on September 7 & 8, alongside Marine Harvest Canada.

Although it is a public inquiry, the level of secrecy has been very high. At issue are the hundreds of thousands of sockeye that are dying every year in the river just before they spawn. Pre spawn mortality is at the heart of Kristi Miller's work. On March 17, 2011 a PowerPoint presentation authored by Miller was entered as an exhibit questioning the relationship between salmon farms and an apparent virus causing Fraser sockeye to enter the river too early and die before spawning. Further explanation by Dr. Miller is expected to be an important aspect of the Commission.

The government and industry people who oversee farmed salmon, disease control, management and promotion will be under oath on the stand. Salmon Are Sacred's 'Voices for Wild Salmon' campaign is reminding citizens that the hearings are open to them and that public participation is essential to this process.

“I have spent the summer travelling around British Columbia,” said Anissa Reed, Outreach Coordinator for Salmon Are Sacred. “The public is aware of B.C.'s wild salmon issues and the Cohen Commission. It is clear that the health and future of our wild salmon is a topic of interest in all regions across the province.”

Ms. Reed was one of about one hundred people who participated in the 'Paddle for Wild Salmon' down the lower Fraser River in October 2010 for the purpose of raising awareness to get fish farm disease records before Justice Cohen.

“The Aquaculture hearings are going to be extremely important to the survival of wild salmon in B.C.,” says Alexandra Morton. “When you have the Privy Council suppressing scientists studying the demise of huge public fishery you can be sure the public is at the losing end. People need to attend this hearing to support Justice Cohen in getting to the bottom of this highly political situation and preventing government from spinning the hearings to meet its needs.”

Salmon Are Sacred will publish daily communications on the proceedings.

For more details visit: <http://www.salmonaresacred.org/cohen-commission>

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