



## Department of Wild Salmon

### **British Columbia salmon farm proposals go forward despite contradicting Cohen Commission**

(Sointula, BC June 26, 2014) An open house for two new salmon farm applications will convene today at the Port Hardy Airport Inn despite conflicts with recommendations #15 to 17 from the Cohen Commission. These recommendations call for the protection of wild salmon migration routes from the placement of salmon farms.

The Cohen Commission was an inquiry set up by the Canadian government to find the cause of the decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River. Led by Justice Bruce Cohen, the \$26 million Commission produced in October 2012 included 75 recommendations to help recover the falling salmon population.

In January 2014, in spite of the Cohen Commission findings, it became public that the Harper Government was committed to opening the coast of British Columbia (BC) to more salmon farms. The two farms in question are in the Goletas Channel (near Port Hardy on the north end of Vancouver Island), an important migration route for sockeye and many other wild salmon stocks.

The applications were submitted by the Tlatasikwala First Nation. However, only Marine Harvest, a Norwegian multi-national company, appears on the maps in the applications.

"Many First Nations in BC are working hard to develop economic stability and employment in their communities," stated Alexandra Morton, independent biologist and fish farm industry observer. "But this project is notable, as the proposed salmon farm sites are on an important migratory route of wild salmon moving north and south along the coast."

Morton went on to say, "It is critical to recognize that when a salmon farm goes into a territory, it affects many others because wild salmon migrate." Less than a month ago, the Wild Salmon Alliance, comprised of 80 BC First Nations, expressed strong concerns that Canada is failing to protect wild salmon from salmon farms and rejected the expansion of the industry.

Concerns about fish farm expansion in BC is not only limited to the Wild Salmon Alliance. There are over 105,000 people who have signed a [petition](#) asking the Premier of British Columbia not to issue anymore Licenses of Occupation for salmon farms because the industry refuses to contain its waste and other impacts, including disease.

Morton concluded, "Tough questions need answers and tough choices need to be made – do we actually want wild salmon or are we giving this province to salmon farming? Why is fish farm expansion occurring on wild salmon migration routes in the face of Cohen Commission recommendations? Do the benefits to one First Nation trump all other Nations along the coast and along the Fraser River? Will Premier Christy Clark approve this site and continue to risk the wild salmon of BC? These are the questions that need to be answered."

The two salmon farms applications can be accessed here:

- [Ghi ya \(Bull Harbour\) Pacific Marine Finfish Aquaculture Application](#)
- [Wanx talis \(Heath Bay\) Pacific Marine Finfish Aquaculture Application](#)

**To schedule interviews, please contact:**

Maria Leung, Environmental Communication Options at [mleung@ecostrategy.ca](mailto:mleung@ecostrategy.ca) or 416-972-7401, or contact Alexandra Morton at 250-974-7086.

**Footage of the event will be available on the morning of June 27, 2014, please contact:**

Twyla Roscovich, [twyla@oceanfilms.net](mailto:twyla@oceanfilms.net).

**For more information about Alexandra Morton, please visit: [www.alexandramorton.ca](http://www.alexandramorton.ca).**

*Alexandra Morton is the founder of the **Department of Wild Salmon**. The Department of Wild Salmon links together the experience and knowledge of hundreds of salmon groups, First Nations, university departments and labs. We use on the ground real-time information and cutting edge science to pinpoint the problems and empower communities to manage the impacts on wild salmon from a local level with a province-wide perspective, keeping each group financially independent.*