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Wild Salmon
Society



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MEDIA RELEASE

100,000+ signature petition to stop salmon farms to be presented in B.C. legislature today

Citizens, First Nations, conservation groups and business leaders call on premier to stop salmon farm expansion

(May 27, 2015, Victoria, B.C.) — More than 100,000 people have signed a petition calling on the B.C. government to halt federal government and B.C. salmon farming industry plans to expand open-net salmon farming in B.C. waters. The petition has received the endorsement of more than one hundred conservation organizations, industry associations, independent business owners and the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce.

MLA Andrew Weaver (Oak Bay-Gordon Head) will present the petition in the B.C. legislature today.

Despite decades of controversy and recommendations to the contrary from the \$37-million Cohen Inquiry, the federal government wants to move ahead with industry expansion plans. However, the B.C. government has the power to curb that growth by withholding approvals for new farm sites and amendments to existing farm tenures that would see them grow in size.

The issue has gained renewed attention because of a recent federal court decision that raises concerns about disease impacts on wild fish from this industry and recent reports of outbreaks of sea lice on juvenile wild salmon now migrating past salmon farms on their way out to sea.



“Control of sea lice was the one issue I thought this industry could fix, but apparently not,” said Alexandra Morton, who has been documenting sea lice outbreaks for 14 years. “Furthermore, the recent federal court ruling on use of diseased salmon in salmon farms has raised significant questions that need to be answered before this industry can even think of growing.”

“Millions of wild juvenile salmon are now migrating through an area that contains the highest density of fish farms on our coast, from Campbell River to Port Hardy,” said Karen Wristen, executive director of Living Oceans Society. “We are calling on Premier Clark to protect B.C.’s iconic wild salmon from federal recklessness and stop the planned expansion of this industry.”

Since assuming responsibility for the management of salmon farming in 2010, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) says it has been working on revised criteria for siting farms. But they are far from completing that task and First Nations and conservation groups say they have been acting without the broad scientific and public consultation needed.

Meanwhile, they have permitted farms, like the one at Sir Edmund Bay (which is currently reporting elevated levels of lice levels), to triple their production.

Key information has also been unavailable from DFO. “We have asked DFO several times to share information on the current status of sea lice on fish farms in affected areas so that we can assess whether existing management strategies are working, but they have refused,” said John Werring, David Suzuki Foundation senior science and policy advisor. “Their failure to respond on an issue of such immense public importance is simply unacceptable.”

“Reams of published science already show that open net-pen salmon farming can depress wild salmon stocks, impede their growth and drive populations toward extinction,” said Stan Proboszcz, Watershed Watch Salmon Society. “Premier Clark has the power to protect B.C.’s wild salmon from salmon farm expansion. More than 100,000 people are counting on her to do the right thing.”

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For a copy of the backgrounder, please click [here](#).

For a copy of the letter of support, please click [here](#).

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