



Fisheries
and Oceans

Pêches
et Océans

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Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

Ms. Gaye Smith
Former Chair
Temagami Stewardship Council Island 970
< gayesmith@onlink.net >

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your correspondence of July 18, 2011, addressed to the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, and the Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, regarding aquaculture in British Columbia. I have been asked to respond on Minister Ashfield's behalf.

I understand your concerns and assure you that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) takes its responsibility to safeguard the health of British Columbia's wild salmon very seriously. DFO is committed to the sustainability, conservation and protection of marine ecosystems and the aquatic species they support in British Columbia.

Since assuming responsibility for the licensing and regulation of finfish, shellfish and freshwater aquaculture operations, DFO has developed new *Fisheries Act* regulations for aquaculture in British Columbia. The *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations* provide a legal framework consistent with the Department's mandate to manage fisheries and protect wild fish and fish habitat. The regulations set the foundation for explicit environmental management requirements, tailored to the specific characteristics of each proposed aquaculture site through licence conditions. These requirements include fish health management plans, escape prevention requirements, and mitigation of habitat impacts and environmental effects.

Monitoring and reporting are a function of all aquaculture licences, and DFO intends to give the public access to as much information as possible concerning the environmental, scientific and operational status of British Columbia aquaculture operations as consistent with laws around privacy and access to information. The Department's objective is to contribute to a higher level of public confidence in aquaculture management through an open and transparent approach to making information readily available to the public in a timely manner.

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The Department has built on the experiences of the past and has carefully examined regulatory regimes for aquaculture management in other countries to identify best practices and lessons learned that are relevant to the situation in British Columbia. The Regulations are available online at < <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2010/2010-12-08/html/sor-dors270-eng.html> >.

Regarding your specific concerns about the escape of farmed salmon, aquaculture operators make escape prevention a priority, as escaped farm fish can be a significant economic loss to the individual fish farm operator. The *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations* licence conditions outline the measures that aquaculture operations must take to minimize the escape of fish from the aquaculture facility and to catch the fish that escape from an aquaculture facility.

DFO has been monitoring the impact of farmed Atlantic salmon on native stocks since 1991. The Department's research shows that farm-raised Atlantic salmon adapt poorly to feeding in the natural environment and show no detrimental effects on Pacific salmon. Worldwide, Atlantic salmon have not been shown to be successful at establishing populations outside their endemic range even when purposely transplanted.

If you would like to discuss aquaculture matters in further detail, you may wish to contact Mr. Andrew Thomson, Director, Aquaculture Management Division, Pacific Region, by telephone at 604-666-3152, or by email at < andrew.thomson@dfo-mpo.gc.ca >.

While DFO is not considering an aquaculture moratorium at this time, the Government of Canada recognizes the cultural, ecological and economic importance of salmon in British Columbia. The Department will continue to work to conserve and protect salmon stocks for current and future generations.

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Reid
Regional Director
Fisheries Management Branch
Pacific Region

JUL 29 2011