



NEW POLL SHOWS 80% OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS WANT CLOSED CONTAINMENT SALMON FARMING

For Immediate Release

April 27, 2005, Vancouver -- In a recent poll conducted by Synovate Research on behalf of Living Oceans Society and the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), 80 % of British Columbians surveyed want the BC government to stop investing in open net cage salmon farming and start investing in closed containment. Furthermore, 72% of people polled said the BC government must stop the expansion of industrial salmon farming.

Scientific studies have found open net pens, which are used on the coast of BC, spread disease and parasites to wild fish. With open net pens, fish waste is dumped in the ocean and Atlantic salmon escape into the wild. Closed containment systems, however, create a barrier between the farmed fish and the ocean, providing protection for the wild salmon and the marine ecosystem

“The salmon farming industry and the provincial government continue to push for unpopular open net salmon farms, while the rest of BC wants to follow a different approach -- one that leads to solutions not conflict,” said Jennifer Lash, Executive Director of Living Oceans Society.

She added there are at least three companies in BC that specialize in building cost effective, closed containment technology, making this approach definitely possible.

“These findings show that whoever wins this election must do what the vast majority of British Columbians want and make replacing open net pens with closed containment technology a priority,” she said. “Using closed containment technology is highly feasible, it would protect the wild salmon and reduce the cycle of disease that has plagued our marine ecosystem.”

Internationally, concerns about the environmental and health costs of farmed salmon are having a growing impact on the BC market.

In recent years, production on salmon farms has decreased, US based organic retail chains, such as Wild Oats and Whole Foods, have cancelled contracts to buy BC farmed salmon, more than 150 restaurants in BC and California have agreed to stop selling farmed salmon and there is a campaign in the United States to encourage Safeway to stop selling BC farmed salmon. And the 5 salmon farm companies operating in BC are not thriving. Heritage Salmon owned by Toronto based Weston Inc, is for sale because of low revenues, Grieg Seafoods is in the red, while Stolt Sea Farms and Nutreco have said they are merging in a bid to become more economically stable and competitive.

For more information, please contact:

Jennifer Lash, Executive Director of Living Oceans Society, (250) 741-4006