

For Immediate Release

Another New Salmon Farm Approved Despite Lack of Citizen Support

Vancouver, BC-August 30, 2007—British Columbians received the disappointing news today that Minister Pat Bell has approved another open net-cage salmon farm in Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island's west coast. This is the second open net-cages farm approved in Nootka Sound since the provincially appointed Special Committee for Sustainable Aquaculture (SCSA) recommended the industry transition to closed containment salmon farming. The licence has been granted to the Norwegian multinational Grieg Seafood.

“The mid-summer deadline, which Minister Pat Bell stated his government would respond to the SCSA recommendations has passed. We hope this is not an indication that BC will continue to promote unsustainable aquaculture” said Dom Repta from the Friends of Clayoquot Sound. “The last thing BC salmon and oceans need is another open net-cage salmon farm contributing waste, escaped farmed salmon, sea lion kills and sea lice outbreaks. The news of this farm is very disappointing for the majority of British Columbians that are concerned about the health of wild salmon.”

The SCSA spent 18 months seeking input from scientists, First Nations, conservation groups, industry and concerned communities to help define sustainable salmon farming. The SCSA report reflects the weight of scientific evidence that shows open net-cage salmon farms cannot co-exist in a sustainable manner with wild salmon and coastal ecosystems.

Minister Pat Bell informed members of the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform that he has yet to approve the application for a closed containment system in Middle Bay, BC, but has approved the rearing of smolts for this operation. “It should be made very clear to Minister Pat Bell that dangling a closed containment carrot in front of those working to protect wild salmon, while taking steps that continuously jeopardize our wild salmon is completely inappropriate” said Deborah Conner from the Georgia Strait Alliance. “We need real actions now from the government indicating they are serious about creating a sustainable aquaculture industry in BC.”

“Government must implement the SCSA recommendations or they will not be acting in the interest of the majority (80 per cent according to recent polling¹) of BC citizens who want to see the open net-cage salmon farms transitioned to closed containment” said Will Soltau from Living Oceans Society. “Despite this recent open net-cage approval, we will continue to work for solutions to make BC's aquaculture a world model in sustainability, one that fosters economic stability, supports coastal communities and is environmentally sustainable.”

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¹ Strategic Communications Omnibus Poll. March 2007