

CAAR WELCOMES REPRIEVE FOR NORTH COAST, URGES ACTION TO PROTECT THE SOUTH COAST

For immediate release

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Vancouver, Prince Rupert: The Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform welcomes today's decision by the BC government to institute an indefinite moratorium on open net-cage salmon farming in northern BC waters but voiced deep concern over more salmon farm approvals on the south coast. It is a huge turning point that the provincial government is recognizing the need to protect marine ecosystems and wild salmon stocks from the impacts of current salmon farming practices. However, the disregard shown for the health of BC's south and central coast is troubling.

"This is a monumental day for northern BC's salmon and the communities that depend on them," said Des Nobels of the T.Buck Suzuki Foundation in Prince Rupert. "The people of the north, who hold their wild salmon in high esteem, worked hard to make their wishes clear to government. But this announcement is just the first step in addressing the concerns of all British Columbians about the threats posed by the salmon farming industry to the future of our wild salmon."

While congratulating Minister Bell and his government on their decision to enact one key recommendation of the Legislature's Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture (SCSA), CAAR is still awaiting a response to the second critical recommendation – the implementation of closed containment salmon farming to protect southern BC waters and wildlife from the continued impacts of open net-cages.

"If net-cage salmon farming is not appropriate for our northern waters, why is it still permitted in the south?" asked Catherine Stewart of the Living Oceans Society, a CAAR member group. "We applaud this government for listening to the citizens of the north and granting a reprieve to the wild salmon and waters of the north coast. Now it is imperative that the Province act to move salmon farms in the south and central coast to closed containment before the wild pink and chum salmon fall into localized extinctions."

The good news of a moratorium in the north was unfortunately offset by continued open net-cage expansion in the south. Not only is there no plan to implement closed containment, but today the province approved a replacement license in Clayoquot Sound and a new farm in Nootka Sound. To date, the Province's response to the SCSA recommendations of closed containment and no new farms has been to approve a total of six open net-cage licenses.

"The moratorium is the first positive step we've seen in a sea of denial and inaction," said Ruby Berry of the Georgia Strait Alliance and CAAR. "We urge the Minister and his government to act now to begin implementing the fundamental changes to fish farming practices that are essential to ensure a future for our south and central coast wild salmon and the marine ecosystem we all depend on."



Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform

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