

Growing Coalition Calls for Moratorium on Salmon Feedlots

For Immediate Release, March 12th, 2012

HALIFAX, NS – Wild salmon conservationists, commercial fisheries groups, environmental organizations, sustainable economic development proponents and tourism operators are united in their concern over the Provincial Government's commitment to expanding open net pen salmon aquaculture in Nova Scotia.

Fifty-one organizations, representing a diverse range of interests, have supported a letter to Premier Darrell Dexter requesting that he declare a moratorium on further expansion of open net pen salmon aquaculture. The organizations express support for closed containment aquaculture and small-scale shellfish marine aquaculture – both areas where Nova Scotia has previously been a leader.

"There are potentially significant environmental and economic consequences for tourism, commercial fisheries, coastal water quality, not to mention jeopardizing any rebuilding of the wild Atlantic salmon populations," says Lewis Hinks of the Atlantic Salmon Federation. "We are asking the Premier to begin to engage meaningfully with coastal communities and to consider replacing the current rapid expansion of net pen salmon aquaculture with more responsible avenues."

Organizations are collaborating in their efforts to bring meaningful public dialogue to the forefront of this issue, particularly in response to controversial open net pen salmon aquaculture expansions in St. Mary's Bay, Shelburne and the Eastern Shore. Federal charges filed against Cooke Aquaculture of New Brunswick alleging illegal pesticide use and an outbreak of Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) at a Cooke operation near Shelburne, Nova Scotia have further contributed to the opposition and raised significant issues related to open net pen salmon aquaculture.

"We are concerned that the draft *Coastal Strategy*, which is heralded as a framework for good stewardship of Nova Scotia's coastline, fails to even mention salmon farms which are the largest industrial expansion on our coasts," says Marike Finlay of the Association for the Protection of the Eastern Shore. "We see this omission as denial by this government to recognize the real issues facing our coasts."

"If a "normal day of business" for open net pen salmon aquaculture means disease, killing fish, lost profit, widespread public outcry - do we really want this business?" asks Sindy Horncastle of MAYDAY-Shelburne County. "The ~ 50% profit margin from salmon feedlots comes at the expense of taxpayers and the environment. Show me a farm that doesn't have to pay for barns, waste removal, air circulation, light, land and taxes on that land - and of course it is profitable."

The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) has submitted a separate letter outlining concerns over open net pen salmon aquaculture expansion and its potential impacts on the tourism industry, which is worth \$1.4 billion annually to the Nova Scotia economy.

For further information contact:

Lewis Hinks, Atlantic Salmon Federation
lhinks@auracom.com p. 902 -275-2179

Marika Finlay, Association for the Protection of the Eastern Shore
Marika.Finlay@gmail.com 902-654-2265

Sindy Horncastle, MAYDAY-Shelburne County
keelers6@hotmail.com, p. 902-875-4771

The following organizations have signed on to the letter sent to the Premier on March 4th, 2012.

Community Organizations, Groups and Coalitions Community

Association for Preservation of the Eastern Shore
Atlantic Coalition for Aquaculture Reform
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Nova Scotia Chapter
Citizens for Sustainable Aquaculture Now
Coastal Coalition of Nova Scotia
Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Eastern Shore Forest Watch Association
Ecology Action Centre
Friar's Bay Development Association
Friends of Port Mouton Bay
Friends of Shelburne Harbour
Fundy BayKeeper
Heavy Current Fishers Association
MAYDAY-Shelburne County
Partnership for the Sustainable Development of Digby Neck & Islands Society
Sierra Club – Atlantic Canada Chapter
St. Mary's Bay Coastal Alliance

Wild Salmon Organizations

Atlantic Salmon Federation
Nova Scotia Salmon Association
Antigonish Rivers Association (ARA)
Fédération québécoise pour le saumon atlantique
Cobequid Salmon Association
Cumberland County River Enhancement Association
Eastern Shore Wildlife Association
LaHave River Salmon Association
Margaree Salmon Association
Medway River Salmon Association*
Mushamush River Salmon Association

Musquodoboit River Watershed Society
New Brunswick Salmon Council
North Colchester River Restoration Association
PEI Council of the Atlantic Salmon Federation
Queens County Fish & Game Association
Sackville Rivers Association
St. Mary's River Association
Trout Nova Scotia
Salmonid Council of Newfoundland and Labrador

Commercial Fishing Associations

1688 Professional Lobster Fishermen Association
Eastern Shore Fishermen's Protective Association (ESFPA)
Fundy Fixed Gear Association
Fundy North Fishermen's Association
Guysborough County Inshore Fishermen's Association
Lobster Fishing Area 33
Lobster Fishing Area 34

Tourism Operators

Brier Island Whale & Seabird Cruises Ltd.
Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia
Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shore*
East Coast Outfitters
Freeport Whale & Seabird Tours*
Gambrel Group Outdoor Adventure

* Organization has joined since the letter was sent on March 4th.

