

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)

Senate Bill 108: FINFISH FARMS AND PRODUCTS

**Senate Resources Committee
March 10, 2025**

Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang



History of Finfish Farming in Alaska



In the late 1980s and early 1990s, salmon farming in other parts of the world was done almost exclusively offshore in large net pens.

Given Alaska's strong wild salmon stocks, concerns were raised over farmed salmon competing for market share with wild salmon fisheries.

In 1990, the Alaska Legislature preemptively passed a ban on commercial salmon and other finfish farming under AS 16.40.210.



A pioneering Norwegian fish farm in 1972/Wikimedia Commons

Present Day & New Technology

Today, technology has rapidly advanced to the point where companies are now raising and harvesting commercial quantities of fish in large shore-based facilities.



Fish farms moving onshore

Land-based fish farming offers many benefits to both the fish and the environment. In traditional offshore farms, the fish are vulnerable to sea lice infestation and infectious diseases. Modern land-based aquaculture systems are able to offer local fish products in landlocked countries.

By [Christina Benjaminsen](#) - Published 22.03.2021

Article published on Phys.org

The Future of Aquaculture: How Sustainable Fish Farming is Transforming the Seafood Industry

August 26, 2024

Article published on Global Seafoods North America

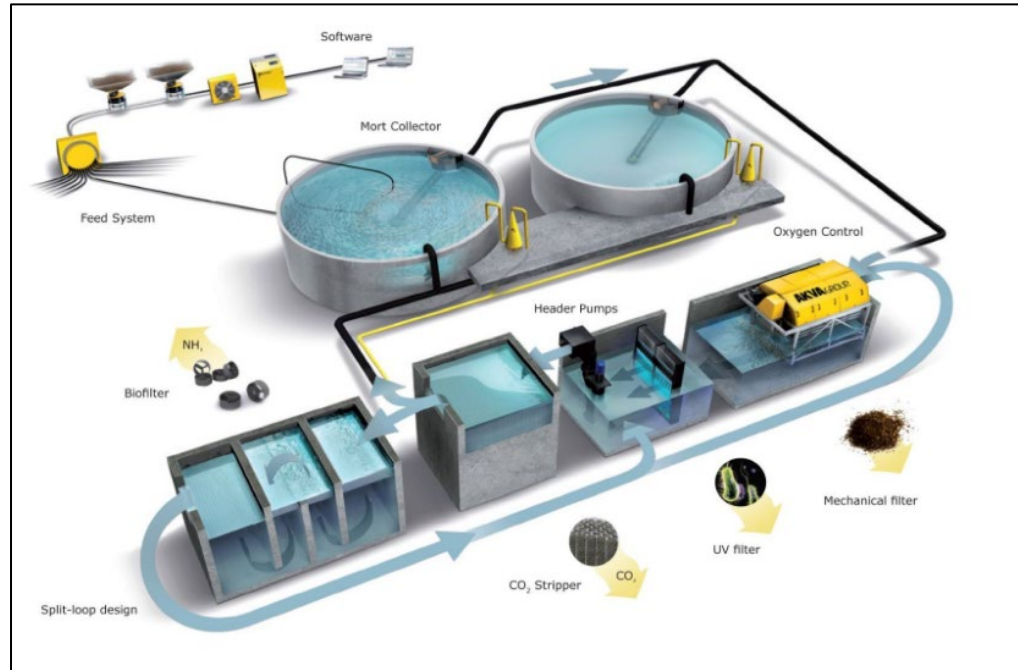
Analytics, genetics tech chart new direction for aquaculture

February 16, 2022 By Nestor Arellano

Article published on Aquaculture North America

Present Day & New Technology

Technological advancements are transforming onshore fish farming into a more efficient, sustainable, and humane industry.



Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS)

Advanced Sensor Technologies

Digital Twin Technology

Digital Twin, a breakthrough for intensive aquaculture

The Digital Twin concept refers to a virtual replica of a real system, integrating advanced mathematical models and data collected in real time. This allows processes and performance to be simulated, monitored and optimised, providing precise and detailed control without direct intervention in the physical environment.



by Davide Ciravolo — April 24, 2024 in Innovation, News Reading Time: 2 mins read

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Overview of SB108



What does the bill do?

- ➔ Authorizes onshore farming of non-salmon finfish in approved land-based facilities in Alaska
- ➔ Limited to inland, closed-system water body enclosed within a natural or artificial escape-proof barrier
- ➔ Allows for a wide range of possible farming opportunities for different fish species such as trout, char, and grayling
- ➔ ADF&G Commissioner has the authority to determine what finfish can and cannot be farmed in Alaska and may add additional permitting restrictions for certain species



Indoor fish farm facility. Credit: Shutterstock/Anirut Krisanakul

SB108 Additional Safeguards



- Offshore fish farming will continue to be banned to prevent any potential impacts on Alaska's wild fish and fisheries
- All fish kept at or sold from a finfish farm must be triploid (sterile)
- Fish farming activities must meet all existing policies, including Fish Transport Permits and Fish Health policies
- Facilities and products are subject to Department of Environmental Conservation regulations and permitting

Icy Waters Arctic Charr Fish Farm in Whitehorse. Pictures courtesy of DCCED Deputy Commissioner Anna Latham

Benefits of Finfish Farming



Food Security: continuation of Alaska's efforts to enhance food security for residents.

Fishing Opportunity: stocking activities would encourage Alaskans to engage in additional recreational fishing.

Economic Growth: introduces a new industry to Alaska, creating jobs and diversifying our economy.



Icy Waters Arctic Charr Fish Farm in Whitehorse. Pictures courtesy of DCCED Deputy Commissioner Anna Latham

Considerations



Some Alaskans have reservations about farmed fish, a perspective rooted in our culture

- ➔ Farmed fish products are increasing outside of Alaska, presenting a challenge to our fisheries
- ➔ The key question is whether we choose to engage this development or continue to overlook these products that already exist in Alaska's markets
- ➔ If we address this issue, we must do so thoughtfully and safely in a manner that ensures Alaska's wild stock fisheries remain viable in the marketplace
- ➔ This legislation is a starting point to begin these discussions



Icy Waters Arctic Charr Fish Farm in Whitehorse. Pictures courtesy of DCCED Deputy Commissioner Anna Latham

Questions?



ADF&G Division of Sport Fish William Jack Hernandez Hatchery



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Icy Waters Arctic Charr Fish Farm in Whitehorse. Pictures courtesy of DCCED Deputy Commissioner Anna Latham