

February 8, 2013

Alaska State Legislature
House Fisheries Committee
Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99811

Chairman Seaton and Fisheries Committee Members,

My name is Sara Pozonsky and I co-own Wild Alaskan Salmon Company, an online Alaskan seafood store (www.SEABEEF.com). I am also the producer of a documentary called A Fishy Tale, which exposes the devastating environmental and health impacts of farmed fish. You can learn more about the film at www.afishtalemovie.com.

I grew up commercial fishing with my father, Chuck Crapuchettes, out in the Bristol Bay as well as in the Cook Inlet and fell in love with Alaska and our fisheries at a young age. I have a huge interest in keeping our marine environment pristine, and especially the health of our wild salmon stocks. I am so concerned about the risks of farmed salmon, and now Frankenfish, that I have privately funded a documentary to try to spread awareness about this devastating industry and practice.

We are told that GE salmon (Frankenfish) are sterile and, even if they escape, they will not harm our wild salmon populations. However, since we have no prior history with this genetically modified salmon, we do not know how much trust we can put into that claim. In fact, of the GE salmon tested, it is noted that up to 5 percent of the fish could be fertile even though they're engineered to be sterile females.¹ We have seen with farmed salmon, that they cannot be controlled and kept out of the wild salmon stock, and have devastated the wild salmon fisheries that surround them. In addition, the amount of pollution that fish farms produce is devastating to the ocean floors and kills all marine life and organisms living there. In fact, NASA space photos reveal that ocean dead zones are found most everywhere open-net fish farms are located.

Also of great concern, is that Monsanto, THE fish feed producer for GE salmon, is spending an absurd amount of money lobbying Congress protecting their interests and have also made sizeable donations to Congressman re-election campaigns. According to OpenSecrets.org data, Monsanto spent almost 6 million dollars in lobbyist efforts in 2012, more than any other agribusiness firm except the tobacco company Altria.²

It makes it almost impossible to compete against that kind of power. The money spent by any environmental coalition or concerned person trying to combat Monsanto pales in comparison. It makes it all the more important that Alaska, and all concerned private citizens around the world, join in this important battle by adding their voice to the opposition of GE salmon.

¹ Genetically Engineered Salmon Nears FDA Approval - <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/genetically-modified-frankenfish-nears-fda-approval-debate-heats/story?id=18078157&page=2>

² Monsanto Co - <http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?id=D000000211&year=2012>

All farmed fish threatens the jobs of Alaskan fisherman and coastal communities that thrive off of the commercial fishing industry. Alaskans need to be vigilant and on guard, making sure that even if the federal government allows GE salmon to be sold, that no fish farm be allowed to operate in Alaska.

Alaskan fishermen have taken great pride in the fact that our government has outlawed fin-fish farms. However, federal waters run well into some of our most pristine commercial fishing waters, and any fish farm located in those waters would devastate those local fisheries. Alaskans do not have control over what the federal government does in federal waters. It would take someone only one visit to British Columbia in Canada to see the economic and environmental devastation fish farms have caused to their once vibrant wild salmon fishery and community.

The health risks of consuming GE salmon are unknown. The health risks of consuming any farmed fish have always been alarming and called into question. We know that the environmental impacts of farmed salmon have also been devastating, and we should expect nothing less from these genetically modified GE salmon. The escape of GE salmon could be devastating to wild fisheries as has been demonstrated by the current farmed fish industry. Prior to approval, the FDA must do its own independent and credible research – not base its findings on the studies given to them by the makers of GE salmon.

And finally, the labeling of GE salmon, and all farmed salmon, must be required. Just as alcohol and cigarette companies are required to put health warnings on their labels, the federal government should require these same health warnings to be on all farmed salmon, especially salmon that has been genetically modified.

It is important the FDA and the Federal Government hear our concerns, and adequately assess the economic threat that GE salmon poses to Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support for House Joint Resolution 5.

Sincerely,

Sara Pozonsky, Owner
Wild Alaskan Salmon Company

Producer, A Fishy Tale