

SCOMM

126:34

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Referred to Committee: February 19, 2002

FURTHER REFERRALS: Resources

Date of Committee Action: 3/18/02

The HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES Committee considered:

HJR 46

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 46

BC MORATORIUM ON FISH FARMING

Relating to the moratorium on fish farming in British Colombia.

Recommends it be replaced with CS HCR 46 (FSA) ☒ Same Title ☐ New Title
For Senate Bills with new title: ☐ Technical Title ☐ New Title: HCR _____

☐ attach amendments

☐ add new referral to _____ Committee

☐ Letter of Intent _____ Committee

**List of
Abbrev.
for
Depts.:**
ADM
CED
COR
CRT
EED
DEC
DFG
GOV
HSS
LAA
LAW
LWF
MVA
DNR
DPS
REV
DOT
UA

[illegible][illegible]

Signing with recommendations		Printed Last Name	DP	DNP	NR	AM
		Dyson	✓			
		Coghill	✓			
		SEALZI	✓			
		Kerttula	✓			
Chair:		Steven	✓			
Chair:	Reese Wilson	Wilson	✓			

22-LS1582V
Utermohle
2/25/02

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 46(FSH)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to the moratorium on fish farming in British Colombia.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS** fishing is not just a business in Alaska, it is a way of life; and

4 **WHEREAS**, when Alaskans fought for statehood, control of our fisheries was a major
5 issue; and

6 **WHEREAS** the Government of British Columbia, whose economic decisions affect
7 the Alaska economy and environment both directly and indirectly, announced on January 31,
8 2002 that the provincial moratorium on fish farming would be lifted; and

9 **WHEREAS** seafood is Alaska's number one export; and

10 **WHEREAS** the commercial fishing industry in Alaska is the state's largest private
11 sector employer; and

12 **WHEREAS** Alaska produces 90 - 95 percent of the commercial harvest of wild
13 salmon in the United States; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in 2001, there were 29,000 accidental releases of farmed salmon from
15 British Columbia salmon farms; and

16 **WHEREAS** farmed Atlantic salmon are the largest bycatch by British Columbia

1 fishermen and escaped farmed Atlantic salmon have been caught in Alaska commercial
2 fisheries; and

3 **WHEREAS** farmed salmon are competing with native Alaska wild salmon for food;
4 and

5 **WHEREAS** disease transfers have been documented from farmed salmon to native
6 wild salmon; and

7 **WHEREAS** escaped Atlantic salmon from salmon farms in British Columbia are now
8 spawning in approximately 80 streams; and

9 **WHEREAS** the Pacific Salmon Treaty with Canada has provisions for the protection
10 of habitat and the safe passage of fish; and

11 **WHEREAS** escaped Atlantic Salmon are a threat to Alaska's marine environment and
12 the ecology of Pacific salmon; and

13 **WHEREAS** the long-term health of Alaska's wild salmon stocks is of vital economic
14 and cultural importance and is a major policy priority of the State of Alaska;

15 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the United
16 States Department of State, while negotiating trade agreements with Canada and in the arena
17 of the Pacific Salmon Commission negotiations on the Pacific Salmon Treaty, to consider the
18 numerous negative effects that farmed salmon from British Columbia have on the economy,
19 environment, and fishing industry of Alaska; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature strongly supports the
21 reinstatement of the British Columbia moratorium on fish farming.

22 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Gordon Campbell, Premier,
23 Government of British Columbia, Canada; the Honorable John van Dongen, Minister of
24 Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries, Government of British Columbia, Canada; the Honorable
25 Colin Powell, United States Secretary of State; the Honorable Don Evans, United States
26 Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Ann Veneman, United States Secretary of
27 Agriculture; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S.
28 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
29 delegation in Congress; and to the members of the Pacific Salmon Commission.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2002 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: HJR 46
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: None
 Title BC Moratorium on Fish Farming BRU _____
 Component _____
 Sponsor Special Committee on Fisheries
 Requester Special Committee on Fisheries Component No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2002) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2003 budget proposal: ☐

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: Special Committee on Fisheries Phone 465-4925
 Division Rep. Stevens, Committee Co-Chair Date/Time 3/1/02 11:17 AM
 Approved by: _____ Date 3/1/2002
 Agency _____

Alaska State Legislature

Representative Gary Stevens - Co-Chair
Alaska State Capitol, Room 428
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone 907-465-4925
Fax 907-465-3517



Representative Peggy Wilson - Co-Chair
Alaska State Capitol, Room 409
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone 907-465-3824
Fax 907-465-3175

House Special Committee on Fisheries

HJR 46 "Relating to the moratorium on fish farming in British Columbia"

Sponsor: House Special Committee on Fisheries

Sponsor Statement

On January 31, 2002, the Government of British Columbia announced that the provincial moratorium on fish farming would be lifted. This decision could have a substantial effect on the Alaskan economy and environment, both directly and indirectly.

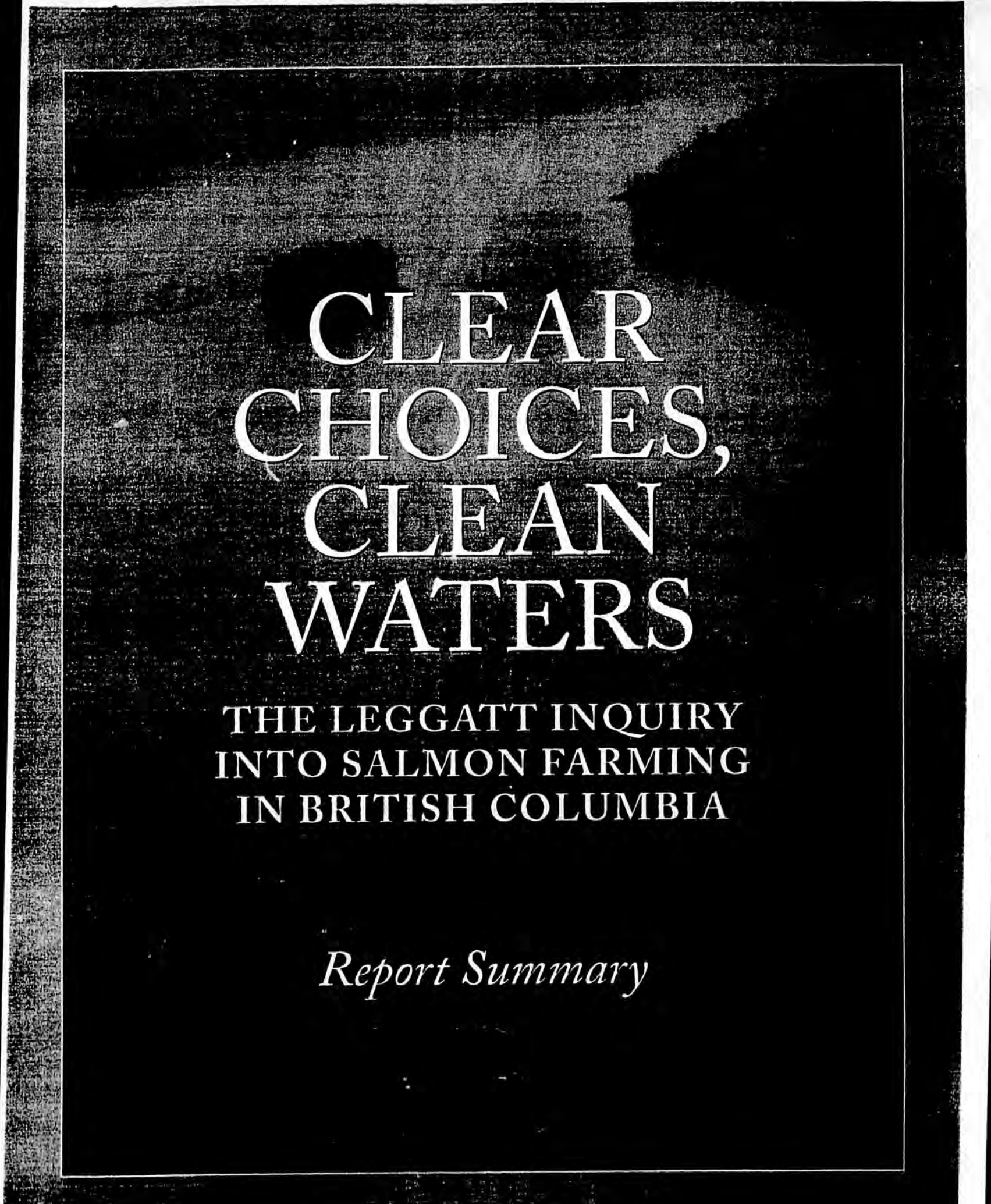
This resolution strongly encourages the Government of British Columbia to reinstate the moratorium on fish farming.

In 2002 there were 29,000 accidental releases of farmed salmon from British Columbia salmon farms. Escaped farmed Atlantic salmon have been caught in Alaska commercial fisheries. The escaped Atlantic salmon pose a threat to Alaska's marine environment and the ecology of Pacific Salmon.

Escaped Atlantic salmon from salmon farms in British Columbia are now spawning in approximately 80 streams on the west coast. These escaped salmon compete with wild Alaskan salmon for food and there is a continuing concern with possible disease transfers.

Seafood is Alaska's number one international export and the commercial fishing industry is Alaska's largest private sector employer.

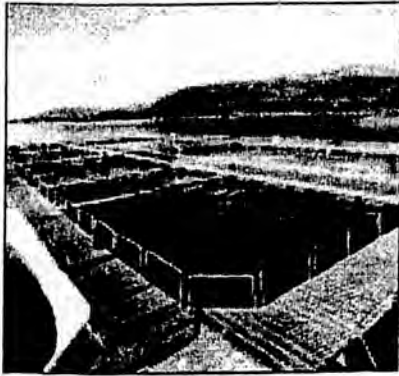
Therefore the Fisheries Committee strongly encourages the Alaska State Legislature to support the reinstatement of the British Columbia moratorium on fish farming.



CLEAR CHOICES, CLEAN WATERS

THE LEGGATT INQUIRY
INTO SALMON FARMING
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Report Summary



Salmon farm net-cages on B.C.'s coast are a source of pollution, disease transfer and escapes of farm fish

The Leggatt Inquiry Terms of Reference

Recent reviews of the salmon farming industry by the Auditor General and the Canadian Senate raised concerns that the industry is being inadequately managed and passes on risks and costs to the general public. A citizen's inquiry will ask for community and public input on the salmon farming industry in order to formulate recommendations and pass them on to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of B.C. and the general public.

Summary statement

It's time to get on with the job: cleaning up the environmental degradation left behind by the salmon farming industry, preventing further damage and involving residents in this process and the future direction of the industry.

Background

The Leggatt Inquiry into Salmon Farming in British Columbia was established September 6, 2001 to gather public input on the salmon farming industry and formulate recommendations. Stuart Leggatt, a retired B.C. Supreme Court judge, was appointed inquiry commissioner. The David Suzuki Foundation established the inquiry in response to calls for public review from the federal Auditor General and the Senate. The inquiry set its own terms of reference and operated independently.

The inquiry held public hearings in Tofino, Port Hardy, Alert Bay, Campbell River and Vancouver from October 1 to 12. There were 109 witnesses and 63 written submissions.

The following are major issues addressed by the inquiry:

- First Nations and salmon farming: rights, risks, responsibilities
- Economic benefits of the salmon farming industry
- Escapes of Atlantic farm salmon and colonization of Pacific salmon habitat
- Disease and parasite transfer from farm salmon to wild Pacific salmon
- Environmental effects of waste and other substances released from salmon farm net cages
- Removal, storage and disposal of dead farm salmon
- Predation by farm salmon of juvenile wild salmon and other species
- The cumulative effects of salmon farming on the health of wild salmon and other species
- The role of government in regulation of salmon farming, the salmon fishery and wild stocks
- The destruction of marine mammals and other wildlife at salmon farm sites
- Conflicts with other industries such as commercial fishing and eco-tourism
- Cross-border conflicts between British Columbia and Alaska
- Farm salmon and human health issues

Recommendations

1. Remove all net-cage salmon farms from the marine environment by January 1, 2005

Removing salmon farm net cages from B.C. waters and replacing them with closed-loop containment systems prevents waste from being discharged and resolves most environmental issues. All salmon farms should be converted within three years, with farms in wild salmon migration routes or other sensitive areas an immediate priority.

2. Remove responsibility for promotion of aquaculture from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; increase monitoring and regulation of salmon farming by government regulators

The department's support and promotion of aquaculture is in conflict with its responsibility to protect wild salmon stocks. DFO must place a priority on wild salmon without this conflicting responsibility. Regulators should effectively monitor the industry and enforce the laws designed to protect our resources and environment.

3. Increase involvement of communities, especially First Nations, in consultation, partnership and ownership of salmon farming operations

Joint-venturing with First Nations and other communities, based on higher environmental standards and recognition of aboriginal rights and local values, would reduce or eliminate conflicts. Local communities should be involved in meaningful consultation to avoid conflict and build support.

4. Maintain the moratorium on new farm sites with no further expansion at existing sites; complete and update the Salmon Aquaculture Review

Maintain the B.C. moratorium and prohibit any further expansion until significant progress is made on environmental issues at existing farm sites. Resolving these issues requires updating and completion of the Salmon Aquaculture Review.

5. Apply the precautionary principle to regulation of the salmon farming industry

Regulators should err on the side of caution to protect environmental values and human health. The importance of the values and the resources at stake requires that the precautionary approach be applied.

6. Require labeling and identification of farm salmon at the consumer level

Farm salmon should be identified distinctly from wild salmon in retail outlets and restaurants so consumers can make informed choices. Farm salmon is often labeled "fresh" or "Atlantic." For many consumers, the relevant distinction is "farm" or "wild."



The Broughton Archipelago, between northern Vancouver Island and the mainland, where many of B.C.'s salmon farms are located

"We were struck by the courtesy, sincerity and goodwill of witnesses from all walks of life and on all sides of the issue. We were reminded once again that the people of British Columbia, regardless of the passion and commitment they bring to an issue, are almost invariably public-spirited, fair-minded and closely connected to the communities, lands and waterways they call home. These qualities, we feel certain, can resolve the conflicts and contradictions that revolve around this industry."

www.legginquiry.com

•Government of British Columbia

News Release**Government of
British Columbia**

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
#02-01
January 31, 2002

New standards to be set for sustainable aquaculture

VICTORIA - New, comprehensive environmental standards and practices will allow for the managed expansion of the salmon aquaculture industry in British Columbia beginning April 30, 2002, the B.C. government announced today.

"The high operating standards proposed by government, along with improved practices, will protect the environment and allow the industry to expand in a sustainable and responsible manner," said John van Dongen, minister of agriculture, food and fisheries. "For more than four years, government has exhaustively reviewed the scientific work done on the salmon aquaculture issue."

In 1995, the previous government placed a moratorium on new marine salmon farm tenures. An Environmental Assessment Office scientific review, completed in 1997, was the most rigorous and costly in the history of the province. It concluded that, as practised, the risks of salmon aquaculture to the environment were low. The review made 49 recommendations that would further reduce risks of salmon aquaculture, all of which were accepted in full by government and industry.

Since October 1999, the government has worked toward implementing policies that will result in the most comprehensive regime of any jurisdiction in the world for managing the salmon aquaculture industry.

"Our government understands that British Columbians expect our environment to be protected and industry to be in full compliance with strict standards," said Joyce Murray, minister of water, land and air protection. "This industry will be managed in a responsible manner."

"This decision will provide the opportunity for careful and sustainable growth of aquaculture in our hard-hit coastal communities," said Stan Hagen, minister of sustainable resource management.

Improved and new policies for fish escapes, fish health, siting and relocations, fish waste and research and development have been developed and will be finalized by April 30, 2002.

Applications for new aquaculture sites will be accepted after April 30, 2002, and are expected to take up to a year to process. Since aquaculture has a long production cycle, businesses need to make decisions now for production to begin by 2003.

The logo for the Office of the Governor Press Releases features a large, stylized letter 'A' on the left. To the right of the 'A', the words 'OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR' are written in a smaller, sans-serif font, and 'Press Releases' is written in a larger, bold, serif font below it.**ALASKA IN THE NEWS**

January 31, 2002

Release 02021

ALASKA ADVERSELY IMPACTED BY BC DECISION TO LIFT MORATORIUM ON SALMON FARMS***Knowles Urges Reconsideration to Protect Alaska Fisheries and Marine Life***

Saying today's decision to lift the moratorium on new salmon farms in British Columbia (BC) will have adverse impacts on Alaska fisheries and fishing communities, Gov. Tony Knowles urged the BC government to reconsider its decision and accept the recommendations of the independent Leggatt Inquiry into salmon farming.

"I find it troubling that when others are questioning the safety and wisdom of salmon farming and raising serious concerns about problems such as contamination, disease, and the escapes of non native species of fish, that our neighbors in British Columbia are moving forward with expansion of this industry," Knowles said.

"Already this year we have seen the release of 8,000 to 10,000 Atlantic salmon from BC salmon farms," Knowles added. "Along with the 29,000 accidental releases last year, these fish have been documented in Alaska waters and raise the serious threat of the creation of spawning populations of this invasive species."

Knowles said the State of Alaska backs the recommendations of the Leggatt Inquiry into the salmon farming issue in its report, "Clear Choices, Clear Waters." Led by former BC Supreme Court Justice Stuart Leggatt, the inquiry recommended keeping the moratorium against new salmon farm sites and called for the removal of all net cage salmon farms from the BC marine environment by 2005. The State of Alaska testified in favor of such steps in its testimony before the Leggatt Inquiry last year.

"Salmon farms are a threat to our ocean environment and the ecology of Pacific salmon," Knowles said. "The State of Maine recently destroyed some 700,000 pen-raised salmon because of because of widespread infectious disease. Now Maine has quarantined certain areas from fish farming and is considering a moratorium of its own."

"Alaska wisely took action to ban this practice a decade ago, along with steps to protect and grow our populations of wild salmon for commercial, sport, and subsistence uses," Knowles said. "I now strongly urge our neighbors in British Columbia to reconsider the positive recommendations of the Leggatt Inquiry and this decision to allow unchecked expansion of the farmed salmon industry immediately adjacent to Alaska waters."

##

Contact:**Bob King, Press Secretary at (907) 465-3995**[Press Releases](#) | [Press Office Contacts](#) | [Contact the Governor](#) | [Webmaster](#) | [State of Alaska](#)-- www.gov.state.ak.us --

Reported Escapes¹ and recoveries of Atlantic salmon in Washington State, British Columbia, and Alaska, 1987-2001².

Year	ATLANTIC SALMON ESCAPES					ATLANTIC SALMON RECOVERIES						NUMBER OF SYSTEMS WITH RECOVERIES		
	Washington ³	British Columbia ⁴				Freshwater			Marine			B.C. Juveniles	B.C. Adults	Alaska Adults
	Adults in Marine Waters	Juveniles in Freshwater	Juveniles in Marine Waters	Adults in Marine Waters	Total B.C. Escapes	Juveniles in B.C.	Adults in B.C.	Adults in Alaska	Adults in B.C.	Adults in Alaska	Total Recoveries			
1987							1		1		2		1	
1988									106		106		0	
1989									8		8		0	
1990							3		2	1	6		1	
1991				6,651	6,651		8		31	7	46		5	
1992			5,000	4,544	9,544		48		349	2	399		9	
1993				10,000	10,000		23		4,543	27	4,593		12	
1994		7,000	24,262	39,547	70,809		50		1,037	25	1,112		12	
1995		941		51,883	52,824		57		678	23	758		19	
1996	110,000	40,000		13,104	53,104	54	211		673	138	1,076	2	30	
1997	370,000	10,464		7,650	18,114	26	129		2,664	75	2,894	4	37	
1998	115,000	300	45,306	43,208	88,814	114	90	1	136	161	502	4	28	1
1999			482	35,248	35,730	150	184		190	19	543	5	15	
2000			1,000	36,462	37,462	12	131	1	7,833	80	8,057	3	18	1
2001				13,500	13,500	3	11	1		27	42	1	2	1
Total	595,000	58,705	76,050	261,797	396,552	359	946	3	18,251	585	20,144			

¹ Unreported escapes include "leakage", the loss of small fish that swim free when small-mesh net pens are replaced by large-mesh net pens.

The salmon farming industry estimates this leakage at 3%-5%; this could total several hundred thousand unreported fish escaping every year.

² Information for 2001 is preliminary.

³ Reporting of escapes or recoveries of Atlantic salmon in Washington State is not required or documented. Those listed here were large enough to make the news.

⁴ Known escapes in British Columbia are required to be reported to the Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Atlantic Salmon Watch program⁵.

The extent of compliance with reporting requirements is suspect, a small number of farms have never reported an escape, nor is "leakage" reported.

⁵ Canada's Atlantic Salmon Watch Program's with extensive data can be accessed on the internet at: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sci/aqua/pages/atlsalm.htm>

For further information on Alaska recoveries contact Glen Oliver at 907-465-4229 or glen_oliver@fishgame.state.ak.us

Cordova District Fishermen United

Celebrating 65 Years of Service to Commercial Fishermen in Cordova, Alaska

P.O. Box 939 Cordova, Alaska 99574 / phone (907) 424-3447 / fax (907) 424-3430 /

e-mail cdfu@ptialaska.net

March 2, 2002

House Fisheries Committee

Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol (MS 3101)

Juneau, AK 99801-1182

SENT VIA FACSIMILE TO 907.465.3517

RE: HJR 46 - Relating to the Moratorium on Fish Farming in British Columbia

Dear Members,

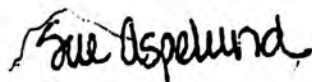
Cordova District Fishermen United represents the commercial fishing fleets of Area E--the Copper River and Prince William Sound.

We recommend your support for HJR 46 recommending reinstatement of the moratorium on fish farms in British Columbia and raising related issues in Pacific Salmon Treaty negotiations. The risks posed to Alaska's wild salmon stocks by B.C. Atlantic salmon escapees and disease transfers is unacceptably high.

We urge the governments of Alaska and of the United States to engage the governments of British Columbia and Canada in discussions and negotiations on these issues.

Alaska's wild salmon runs and fisheries are too important to risk!

Sincerely,



Sue Aspelund

Executive Director

cc: Representative Beth Kerttula

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

9369 North Douglas Highway
Juneau, AK 99801



Phone 907-586-6652

Fax 907-586-5648

E-mail: seafa@gci.net

March 4, 2002

Representative Gary Stevens, Co-Chair
Representative Peggy Wilson, Co-Chair
Special House Committee on Fisheries

Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 124
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HJR 46 Support

The Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEafa) appreciates Representative Kerttula and Representative Dyson bringing forward a resolution regarding the lifting of the moratorium on new fish farms in British Columbia and the fish committee for sponsoring the resolution. We fully support a resolution on this issue.

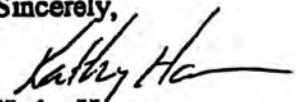
We would like to suggest the following change to the resolution to provide more accuracy.

- Page 2 line 7&8 take out the words native Alaska. At this time there is not any documented disease transfer to Alaska wild salmon but has occurred in places such as Maine, Norway, and Scotland.

As commercial salmon fishermen in Southeast Alaska we are extremely concerned about new fish farms right below the border. We consider the raising of Atlantic salmon on the Pacific Coast to result in the introduction of an exotic species. We currently catch Atlantic salmon escapees from Canada and the Pacific Northwest fish farms while we gillnet in Southeast Alaska. To put the farms just over the border as the expansion of new farms is mostly expected to occur around Prince Rupert is of extreme concern.

We urge the Fish committee to pass this resolution out of committee as additional support for Senator Frank Murkowski and the letter he has written to Honorable Colin Powell, Secretary of State.

Sincerely,


Kathy Hansen
Executive Director

Petersburg Vessel Owners Association

P.O. Box 232
Petersburg, Alaska 99833
Phone (907) 772-9323 Fax (907) 772-4495

March 1, 2002

Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Gary Stevens
Co-Chairs
House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol (MS 3100)
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: HJR No. 46; Relating to the Moratorium on Fish Farming in British Columbia

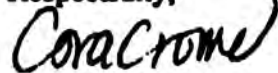
Petersburg Vessel Owners Association is a group of commercial fishermen who participate in many fisheries statewide. Many of our members rely on salmon for a substantial portion of their annual income. In addition, income generated by salmon is very important to our community and to other coastal communities. We would like to thank the Special Committee on Fisheries for introducing this resolution. We are in full support of this resolution relating to the moratorium on fish farming in British Columbia.

We feel that the expansion of British Columbia's fish farming industry poses a major threat to the health of our wild salmon resources. The existing fish farms in British Columbia have already accidentally released a large number of farmed Atlantic salmon that are swimming and reproducing in our streams. In addition to the threat interbreeding poses to our wild stocks, farmed fish are competing with wild Alaskan salmon for food. Disease transfers have been documented from farmed salmon to wild Alaskan salmon.

The full environmental effects of fish farms are yet to be determined. An independent scientific inquiry determined that British Columbia should not lift the moratorium on fish farming. However, the moratorium was lifted on January 31, 2002. We feel that the decision to lift the moratorium and the plans to aggressively expand the number of fish farms in British Columbia will have significant adverse impacts on the health of wild Alaskan salmon and on the Alaskans who rely on them.

We appreciate your support in passing this resolution and your consideration of these comments. If we can provide more information, please feel free to contact us.

Respectfully,



Cora Crome
Director

ATLANTIC SALMON

A White Paper

Alaska Department of Fish and Game – Southeast Region
February 24, 1999

I. Danger Signals

Historically the enormous number and scope of the wild salmon runs played an important role in defining the Pacific Northwest's unique character. Many of the formerly great runs of Pacific salmon, particularly in southern portions of their range, are now depressed well below historical levels because of the effects of dams, urbanization, and deforestation. In the northern portions of their range most runs of wild salmon remain abundant and a key component of both ocean and coastal ecosystems. These surviving runs represent a renewable resource worth millions of dollars and support rural communities that are dependent on fishing for their cash economies.

Now a new threat to the survival and abundance of wild Pacific salmon appears. In the late 1980's salmon "farms" began to import Atlantic salmon from eastern Canada and Europe. These salmon are raised to maturity in floating saltwater net pens which, damaged by storms and accidents, have released tens of thousands of captive Atlantic salmon.

The annual release of tens of thousands of mature Atlantic salmon into the already challenged Pacific Coast ecosystem amounts to "biological pollution" of the ocean and represents an enormous potential threat to wild Pacific salmon. Introductions of non-native species have frequently resulted in unexpected and often disastrous consequences resulting from competition, predation, crossbreeding, or the introduction of non-native diseases or parasites. Escaped Atlantic salmon are now commonly found in both fresh and saltwater throughout the region. The Canadian press recently reported that Atlantic salmon were spawning successfully in British Columbia's Tsitika River. Sexually mature Atlantic salmon have now been found in streams in Southeast Alaska.

In 1990 Alaska banned salmon farms to protect wild Pacific salmon from potential disease, competition, and other threats. Now, actions by jurisdiction south of Alaska - including the potential expansion of salmon farming by British Columbia threatens Alaska's conservation action. Instead of expanding salmon farm operations, Alaska believes: 1) that there should be a coastwide moratorium on new salmon farms, 2) that Atlantic salmon production in existing farms be immediately capped at current levels, and phased out within a specified timeframe, 3) that farm processes be modified as necessary to eliminate ongoing accidental releases and the chance of disease transmission, and 4) that further imports of fish or fish-products from the Atlantic cease.

**Alaska Trollers Association City of Cordova
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association
Senator Dick Ellason Southeast Alaska Conservation Council
Southeast Conference Taku Smokerles**

For Immediate Release
December 3, 2001

**British Columbia Fish Farm Inquiry Recommends Ban on Net-Cage Salmon Farms
*Proposal Wins Support Across Alaska***

Testimony and findings from the October 2001 Leggatt Inquiry independent investigation into British Columbia salmon farms confirmed what Alaskans already know; net-cage salmon farms in B.C. are bad for the environment and bad for Alaskan fishermen and communities.

The Leggatt Inquiry recently released its findings, *Clear Choices, Clean Waters*, reporting that net-cage salmon farms are the cause of major environmental damage to the coastal environment and pose a significant threat to wild fish stocks. The report lists six recommendations for mitigating damage, including removing all net-cage salmon farms by 2005.

Groups across Alaska are pleased that the Leggatt Inquiry recognizes the environmental and social problems posed by salmon farms.

"Alaskan's worst fears about the ecological, human health, labor relations problems and other dangers of fish farming are coming true. Nearly every day, new information surfaces from points across the globe on troubles and conflicts stemming from salmon farming. As the report says, these problems are serious. We don't want them in Alaska," said Dale Kelley, Executive Director of the Alaska Trollers Association.

"Wild salmon are a mainstay of families in Alaska's communities and the heart of Southeast Alaska's rainforest—they're vital to commercial, sport and subsistence fishermen. We simply can't let farmed salmon damage our healthy wild watersheds and coastal resources," said Aurah Landau, Grassroots Organizer at Southeast Alaska Conservation Council.

The Leggatt Inquiry report cites hard evidence that farm fish carry diseases and transfer parasites to wild fish. Fish farms have concentrated amounts of waste and sewage, and waters around fish farms can be fouled by massive die-offs, with vast numbers of salmon rotting in pens.

"Fortunately, Alaska has a moratorium on all fish farms, and so hasn't experienced B.C.'s salmon farm-related disease, parasite, or pollution problems," noted Landau.

Alaskan fishermen and biologists have, however, found escaped farm fish in marine and fresh waters as far north as the Bering Sea. Escaped Atlantic salmon have successfully reproduced in Canadian streams. This non-indigenous species will invade wild fish habitat, spread disease, prey on, and take food from wild fish. B.C. also raises chinook and coho salmon. Escapes of those species may genetically weaken local Pacific salmon stocks.

Oliver Holm, lifelong commercial fisherman and President of the Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association Board of Directors, worries that the fish farming industry isn't held to genetics policies strong enough to protect wild fish. "Here in Alaska, we don't introduce Atlantic salmon, change the genetic make-up of the fish we raise, or release fish where they will interfere with local stocks and displace our vital local runs. Canadian fish farming practices do all this, even if inadvertently. If continued, they can really harm wild Alaskan salmon runs," said Holm.

- more -

"These fish have no idea if they're wrapped in Maple Leaves or Old Glory - we are finding them in Alaskan waters and are deeply concerned," commented Kelley. She cites Canada and Alaska's obligation to protect both fish and fishermen under the Pacific Salmon Treaty, saying that, "Leggatt's recommendations to prevent escapement and reduce environmental problems should be acted on immediately. They are right in line with the overarching principles of the Treaty."

As the largest private industry in Alaska, commercial fishing and seafood processing sustain thousands of families and communities throughout the state.

Southeast Conference Executive Director Loren Gerhard said, "Salmon are clearly one of the most important contributors to our local economy and social well-being. Anglers, subsistence users, and the seafood and guided sportfishing industries all rely on the pursuit of wild salmon. We Alaskans are very interested in maintaining the health of that resource."

Alaskan and Canadian coastal economies are interconnected and reliant on one another. The affect of the current glut of farmed salmon on the market has been devastating as salmon prices plummet worldwide and small businesses struggle to keep afloat.

Sandro Lane owner of Juneau based processing plant, Taku Smokeries, noted that, "Family businesses and viable townships -- in both countries-- are being put out of business as deep pocketed firms flood the market with cheap fish."

The Leggatt Inquiry testimony and findings also raised questions about the wholesomeness of farmed salmon. The report includes a recommendation to label farmed salmon to distinguish it from wild.

Cordova Mayor Margy Johnson expressed concern that fishermen in her town are not given a level playing field when competing with heavily subsidized farmed fish in the marketplace. She added, "As a long-time restaurateur, I find consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of what they eat. Given a choice, most people tend to chose wild salmon over farmed."

Alaskans across the state hail the Leggatt Report's practical overview of the problems with salmon net-pen farming, and its meaningful recommendations.

"Removing net cages by 2005 is a solid first step towards reducing the impact of farmed salmon on our precious wild salmon runs. We are encouraged by the report and hope officials in British Columbia move quickly to implement Leggatt's recommendations," said Kelley.

"Alaskans should urge both British Columbia and Alaska to maintain their moratoriums on new or expanding fish farms," continued Landau.

Twenty-two year veteran Senator Dick Eliason led the late 1980s charge to deny fish farming in Alaska. Eliason told Leggatt that since that time, "I have received many letters, newspaper articles and scientific reports supporting our position and affirming our concerns as valid." He added that he feels good about the choice Alaskan's made on this issue, "From the perspective of safeguarding our resources and local economy, fish farming is clearly not the way to go."

Canada's federal Auditor General and the Senate ordered the Leggatt Inquiry of fish farm policy for public consultation and review. At the Leggatt Inquiry into British Columbia's salmon net-pen industry, Southeast Alaskan citizens and organizations requested the Canadian government to ban new salmon farms and cap growth on existing salmon farms in British Columbia. Canadian and Pacific Northwest colleagues testified with similar requests. The Honorable Stuart Leggatt, retired parliamentarian and B.C. Supreme Court Judge presided as Inquiry commissioner.

- more -

The Leggatt Report advises the Canadian government to:

1. Remove all net-cage salmon farms from the marine environment by January 1, 2005.
2. Remove responsibility for promotion of aquaculture from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; increase monitoring and regulation of salmon farming by government regulators.
3. Increase involvement of communities, especially First Nations, in consultation, partnership and ownership of salmon farming operations.
4. Maintain the moratorium on new farm sites with no further expansion at existing sites; complete and update the Salmon Aquaculture Review.
5. Apply the precautionary principle to regulation of the salmon farming industry.
6. Require labeling and identification of farm salmon at the consumer level.

-30-

Contacts

Dale Kelley

Aurah Landau

Loren Gerhard

Alaska Trollers Association

Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

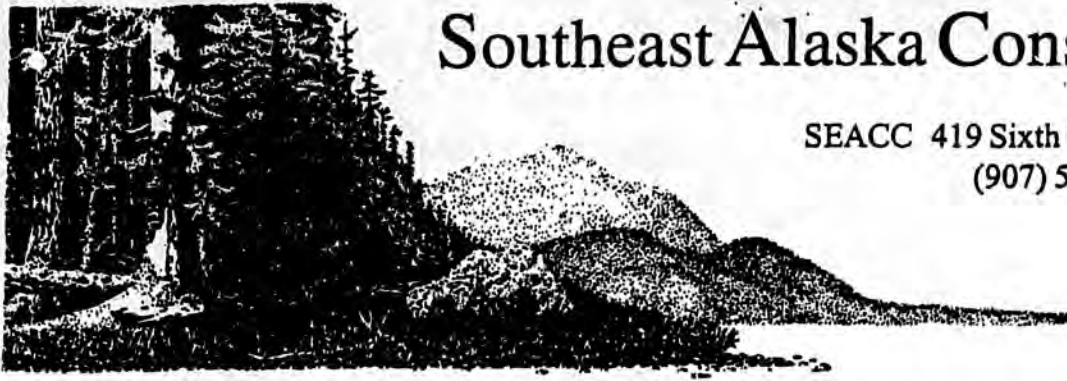
Southeast Conference

(907) 586-9400 / 723-8765

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(907) 463 3445

For a copy of the Leggatt Inquiry report, see <http://www.leggattinquiry.com/Report/InquiryReport.asp>



Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

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(907) 586-6942 phone (907) 463-3312 fax
info@seacc.org

A Resolution Supporting a Ban on Pacific Coast Marine-Based Salmon Farming

Whereas commercial fishing and seafood processing comprise Southeast Alaska's largest private industry;

Whereas more than 80% of Southeast Alaska's rural households rely on subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering and one out of four households harvest more than 250 pounds of wild food per year;

Whereas Tongass streams and lakes spawn and rear 80% of the wild salmon in Southeast Alaska, and wild salmon populations are dependant on wild watersheds;

Whereas Southeast Alaska salmon populations are robust, and not endangered, and can be maintained that way through reasonable effort;

Whereas farmed salmon potentially threaten to contaminate Southeast Alaskan salmon runs through risk of exotic disease transfer, habitat encroachment, competition for prey fish, and genetic weakening;

Whereas salmon farms threaten coastal resources with concentrated amounts of biowaste;

Whereas farmed salmon often contain antibiotics, pesticides, herbicides and dyes;

Whereas farmed salmon are not an environmentally sound, healthy alternative to wild salmon;

Whereas wild Alaskan salmon consume a natural diet, and are prized for their purity and wild origins;

Whereas wild Alaskan salmon set the standard for a wholesome and nutritious commodity, and are managed utilizing sustainable harvesting practices;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council supports Alaska's existing moratorium on salmon farms, and strongly urges the State of Alaska to renew the moratorium when it comes up for review;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council opposes any move towards marine-based salmon farming in the State of Alaska;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council encourages British Columbia to uphold the moratorium on new marine-based salmon farms;

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council encourages British Colombia to establish stringent facility maintenance and oversight standards on existing marine-based salmon farms to prevent further escapement;

Southeast Alaska Conservation Council Board of Directors
Resolution 010902-2

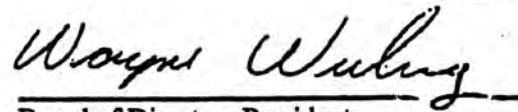
Page 1 of 2

Therefore be it resolved that the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council opposes siting new salmon farms in the ocean; and

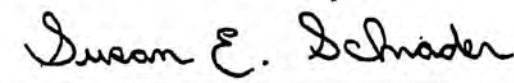
Therefore be it resolved that the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council opposes marine-based salmon farms because of the risks they pose to healthy populations of wild Alaskan salmon and intact Southeast Alaskan coastal resources.

ADOPTED this 2nd day of September 2001 by the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council by a vote of 12 ayes, 2 nays, and 0 abstentions from all present voting members of the Board of Directors.

CERTIFY


Board of Directors President

ATTEST

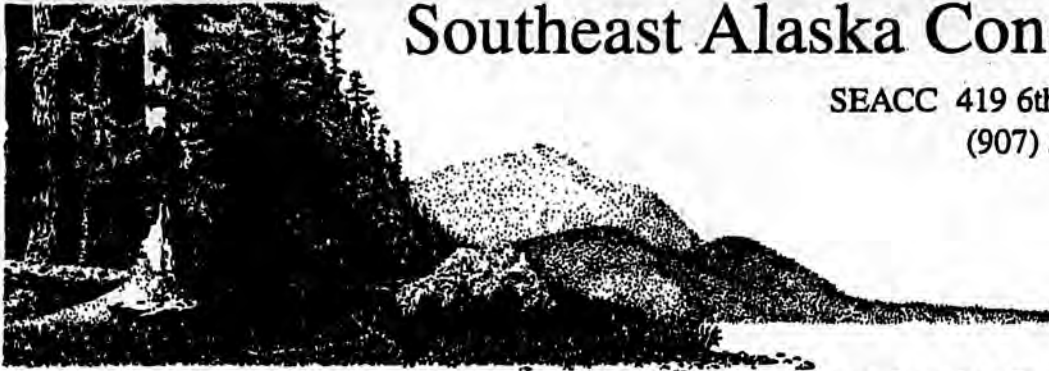

Board of Directors Secretary

SEACC is a coalition of eighteen volunteer conservation groups in fourteen far-flung communities across Southeast Alaska, from Ketchikan to Yakutat. SEACC's individual members include commercial and sport fishermen, Alaska Natives, subsistence users, hunters and guides, tourism and recreation business owners, small timber operators and high value-added wood product manufacturers, as well as concerned citizens from all walks of life. SEACC is dedicated to safeguarding the integrity of Southeast Alaska's unsurpassed natural environment while providing for balanced, sustainable use of our region's resources.

Copies sent to:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Alaska Department of Fish and Game Advisory
Committees
Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing
Association
Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association
Alaska Marine Conservation Council
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute
Alaska Trollers Association
Alaska Board of Fisheries
Fishermen Involved in Saving Habitat
Governor Tony Knowles
Oceans Blue Foundation

Petersburg Vessel Owners Association
Regional Subsistence Advisory Councils
Sierra Club, Alaska
Sierra Club, B.C.
Sierra Club, Washington
Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance
Southeast Alaska Seiners Association
Southern S.E. Regional Aquaculture Association
Transboundary Watershed Alliance
United Fishermen of Alaska
United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters
United States Forest Service



Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

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Testimony of Aurah Landau before the House Special Committee on Fisheries on HJR 46 "Relating to the moratorium of fish farming in British Columbia" 03/18/02

- ☐ Salmon farms in British Columbia (BC) are bad for the environment and bad for Alaskan fishermen and communities.
- ☐ As the largest private industry in Alaska, commercial fishing and seafood processing sustain thousands of families and communities throughout the state. Wild salmon are a mainstay of families in Alaska's communities and the heart of the rainforest that stretches across the BC and Alaskan coastline. We need intact high-producing watersheds and wild salmon runs to sustain subsistence, sport and commercial fisheries opportunities on both sides of the border.
- ☐ The BC government lifted its moratorium on new fish farms, ignoring the scientists, government officials, and representatives from fishing, Native, conservation and citizen organizations who testified at the recent Leggatt Inquiry that fish farms cause environmental, social and economic harm.
- ☐ Alaskan and Canadian coastal economies are interconnected and reliant on one another. The effect of the current glut of farmed salmon on the market has been devastating as salmon prices plummet worldwide and small businesses struggle to keep afloat.
- ☐ There is hard evidence that farm fish carry diseases and transfer parasites to wild fish. Fish farms have concentrated amounts of waste and sewage, and waters around fish farms can be fouled by massive die-offs, with vast numbers of salmon rotting in pens. Fortunately, Alaska has a moratorium on all fish farms, and so hasn't experienced BC's direct salmon farm-related disease, parasite, or pollution problems.
- ☐ Alaskan fishermen and biologists are, however, finding escaped farm fish in marine and fresh waters as far north as the Bering Sea. Escaped Atlantic salmon are successfully reproducing in Canadian streams. This non-indigenous species may invade wild fish habitat, spread disease, take food from and prey on wild fish. B.C. also raises chinook and coho salmon. Escapes of those species may genetically weaken local Pacific salmon stocks.
- ☐ Sustainability is the real issue here. Maine recently destroyed many of their farmed fish because of widespread disease. Fish farming in Norway, Scotland and Ireland has contributed to the collapse of wild fish stocks in those countries. Norway found that fish farms expose wild fish to high concentrations of pathogens and parasites. When the BC government promotes fish farms, how long do we have until wild salmon fisheries collapse on either side of the border? It's bad economics and irresponsible to threaten our shared marine systems with even more fish farms.
- ☐ I thank the House Fisheries Committee for their wisdom and responsibility in supporting Alaska's fishing communities by strongly encouraging the BC government to reinstate the moratorium on new fish farms. BC must be a good neighbor and reinstate the moratorium to prevent damage to intact wild salmon runs and marine resources in both countries.

ALASKA SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FOREST DWELLERS, Point Baker • ALASKANS FOR JUNEAU • CHICAGO CONSERVATION COUNCIL, Tenakee
CUSTOMARY & TRADITIONAL GATHERING COUNCIL OF KAKE • FRIENDS OF BERNERS BAY, Juneau • FRIENDS OF GLACIER BAY, Gustavus • JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY
JUNEAU GROUP SIERRA CLUB • LOWER CHATHAM CONSERVATION SOCIETY, Port Alexander • LYNN CANAL CONSERVATION, Haines • NARROWS CONSERVATION
COALITION, Petersburg • LISIANSKI INLET RESOURCE COUNCIL, Pelican • PRINCE OF WALES CONSERVATION LEAGUE, Craig • SITKA CONSERVATION SOCIETY
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