

Wilderness Tourism Association



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For Immediate Release

Wilderness Tourism Association Urges Norwegian Corporations to Stop Killing Wild Salmon in BC

On June 8, seven delegates representing the Pure Salmon campaign, including Catherine Stewart of the Living Oceans Society, Bob Chamberlin, First Nations Chief of the MTTC (Musgamagw Tsasataineuk Tribal Council), Ricardo Casas, President of the Federation of Workers from the Chilean salmon farms and Brian Gunn, President of the Wilderness Tourism Association of BC, headed to Oslo, Norway in anticipation of meeting with Marine Harvest's Board of Directors and the Canadian Ambassador regarding the ongoing issue of the large numbers of sea lice infecting wild salmon in BC.

"The people of Norway should be ashamed by the behaviour of their corporations abroad," says Brian Gunn, President of the WTA. "Cermaq is partially owned by the government of Norway. How can the citizens of this responsible, progressive nation tolerate their countrymen putting the very survival of BC's wild salmon stocks at risk through their constant refusal to acknowledge in Canada what is commonly accepted as fact in Norway?"

Wild Pacific chum and pink salmon are significantly more vulnerable to the impacts of sea lice due to their small size when encountering the lice-infested salmon farms. The Pacific chum and pink salmon weigh as little as one gram when they enter salt water and research has confirmed that *even one louse* on these tiny fish can be fatal.

"Your farms operating with open net cages are breeding billions of sea lice that are killing millions of salmon fry and threatening our business survival for half of our nature based businesses who depend on wild salmon," wrote Brian Gunn of the WTA in his letter of appeal to Marine Harvest Shareholders.

Nature based tourism in BC generates revenues amounting to \$1.2 billion and provides employment for 16,000 people. The Wilderness Tourism Association represents approximately 100 nature based tour operators.

The Association is asking the Marine Harvest Board to order their Canadian farm managers to publicly accept their role in the sea lice problem and focus their efforts on cooperative work toward developing solutions.

In the short term, fish farm companies are being asked to fallow or move farms that are situated on the out migration routes of pink and chum salmon. In the long term, the

delegates would like to see a move towards floating closed containment systems, which are presently being developed in Campbell River, BC.

“If you do take action to resolve the sea lice problem to our satisfaction, you will see support from our (the nature based tourism) industry which will increase your business certainty and will enhance the economic and social opportunities much needed by our coastal communities,” concludes Brian Gunn in his letter to Marine Harvest.

Mr. Gunn also met with the CEO of Cermaq to raise the same issues with him. Mr Gunn attended the Marine Harvest AGM in Oslo on Wednesday, June 13, where he had an opportunity to verbalize his concerns and hand deliver his letter to the shareholders.