

# Wilderness Tourism Association



BRITISH COLUMBIA | CANADA

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June 2, 2011

The Honourable Keith Ashfield  
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans  
Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

**RE: Moratorium on Expansion of Salmon Farms**

I am writing on behalf of Wilderness Tourism Association (WTA), and our members who operate nature based tourism businesses throughout British Columbia. We are very concerned with the recent proposals by salmon farm companies to expand their operations in coastal areas.

Currently, there are already 130 licensed salmon farms on the coast of BC and independent research indicates that these farms are associated with severely depleted numbers of BC wild salmon. Sampling of wild juvenile salmon in all areas of the coast where concentrations of salmon farms exist, shows a clear correlation between an increase in the prevalence of sea lice on the wild juvenile salmon, and the number of salmon farms these out-migrating wild salmon must pass. Researchers, both inside and outside government, do not dispute this fact. And although there are differing positions regarding the impacts of sea lice on salmon, high levels of sea lice have been observed by many independent researchers to have a devastating effect on the survival rate of wild fish. In addition to elevated populations of sea lice, suspected viral outbreaks and other environmental problems have been observed around fish farms in numerous other locations in BC where wild salmon numbers are also collapsing.

For this and other reasons, the WTA supports a precautionary approach towards salmon farming and asks for your government to work with the province of BC to create a moratorium on the expansion of open net caged fin fish aquaculture on the entire coast of BC. This moratorium is needed until there is a clear demonstration and agreement (supported by peer reviewed science) that open net caged salmon farm have minimal or no impact on wild fish stocks.

For your information we have attached our submission to government regarding a new salmon farm site application at Plover Point in Clayoquot Sound. This application is proposed for a location where the wild salmon stocks have been badly devastated in part by the existing salmon farms and where another farm will severely exacerbate the problem of wild salmon survival.

Thank-you for taking the time to address our concerns.

Yours truly,

Brian Gunn  
President  
BC Wilderness Tourism Association

CC. Andrew Thomson; Director, Aquaculture Management, Fisheries and Oceans Canada