

Wilderness Tourism Association



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Tourism group urges stronger protection for wild salmon

For Immediate Release

(Campbell River, BC; March 27) BC's tourism industry, led by the Wilderness Tourism Association of BC (WTABC), applauds the BC Government's announcement that they have accepted the intent of each of the eight Cohen Commission recommendations that directly reference the Province.

"We are happy that the BC government may be taking the plight of wild salmon seriously by accepting these recommendations from the Cohen report", said Jim DeHart, President of the Wilderness Tourism Association of BC. "In particular the WTABC is pleased with the B.C. government's statement that they have no intention of issuing any new tenure agreements for net-pen salmon farms in the Discovery Islands until Sept. 30, 2020. This is a key development in the conversation regarding the survival of wild salmon and the impact that the salmon farming industry may be having on wild salmon. However, we believe that government needs to go further to protect wild salmon."

"While we support a moratorium on the expansion of open net-pen salmon farms in the Discovery Islands, the WTABC wants a moratorium expanded to the entire coast of BC until there is a clear demonstration and agreement (supported by peer reviewed science) that open net-pen salmon farms have minimal or no impact on wild fish stocks", said DeHart. "Further, the WTABC wants the Province and the government of Canada to close or fallow the salmon farms on BC's key salmon migratory routes such as in the Discovery Islands, the Broughton Archipelago, and Clayoquot Sound. Only these actions would be following the precautionary principle."

"The WTABC also wants the Province, the government of Canada and the aquaculture industry to commit to a transition to closed containment technologies as soon as possible", said DeHart. "We acknowledge that Environment Critic, Rob Fleming, has stated that 'the NDP would initiate a review of the issue including looking at banning open net fish farms along key salmon migration routes'. The NDP have also supported an industry transition to closed containment in the past. We would highly support these positions and look forward to seeing a policy that will help protect wild salmon and the thousands of tourism jobs and businesses that it supports."

"We desperately need government to stand up and take the protection wild salmon seriously", said DeHart. "BC's tourism industry is whole heartedly dependent on having healthy wild salmon populations. We could say that wild salmon puts the 'Super Natural' in British Columbia. Consequently, the protection of wild salmon will continue to be a key issue for the tourism industry"

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The Wilderness Tourism Association of BC represents approximately 2000 nature-based tourism businesses and sector associations, \$1.5 billion in tourism revenue and 26,000 jobs in BC. Our mission is to ensure a sustainable future for BC's wilderness tourism industry through leadership, advocacy, and stewardship. Please visit our website at www.bcwta.ca.

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