



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-00997**

BY: **MR. DONNELLY (PORT MOODY-COQUITLAM)**

DATE: **DECEMBER 2, 2016**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SERGE CORMIER**

Response by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Fishing industry

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada takes the protection of wild salmon on the west coast of Canada very seriously. As the lead federal department in this area, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) spends approximately \$20M annually in the Pacific region on wild stock/fishery monitoring and research and, over the past 5 years, approximately \$2M annually on wild-farm salmon interactions research. Budget 2016 provided new funding to DFO to increase ocean and freshwater science including research that will support sustainable aquaculture. This supports more research on the effects of aquaculture on ecosystems and wild species, increased coastal monitoring, the development of mitigation techniques and increasing diagnostic testing for pathogens and diseases in farmed and wild fish.

More specifically, with regards to aquaculture, the Government of Canada agrees that these operations must be conducted in a sustainable manner, reducing environmental impacts, mitigating the impacts that do occur, and minimizing interactions with wild populations and their habitat as much as possible.

The Canadian aquaculture industry operates under some of the strictest regulations in the world, implemented federally and provincially, to minimize risk to the environment. All aquaculture operations are subject to frequent monitoring to ensure high standards of environmental performance. Canada's regulatory regime in the aquaculture sector, much like that of terrestrial farming, is underpinned by the best scientific research and analysis available to provide assurance that the environmental effects of aquaculture can be well managed and the industry conducted in a sustainable manner. In addition to regulation, the Canadian aquaculture sector is required to report to federal and provincial governments regarding its activities. Under the federal Aquaculture Activities Regulations (AAR), for example, industry has numerous

reporting requirements, including notifying Fisheries and Oceans Canada prior to any drug or pesticide treatments as well as any mortality events that might have occurred in wild populations following these treatments, and annual reporting on reasons for and use of these therapeutants. Aquaculture operators are also required to conduct benthic monitoring to assess impact on the environment, and report on mitigation measures they have undertaken to reduce serious harm to wild populations and their habitats. All aquaculture operators must implement high standards for escape prevention and report any escapes that have occurred.

In British Columbia, the only province under federal regulation where reporting has been taking place for the past five years, evidence is available that demonstrates that the degree of impact does not warrant the removal of an entire industry from the marine environment, particularly when the socio-economic implications of such a removal are considered. Removing salmon aquaculture from the marine environment would threaten thousands of jobs, most of them located in rural, remote and coastal areas hard-hit by downturns in other resource industries. Across Canada, more than 50 First Nations are involved in aquaculture, providing stable, full-time employment for Indigenous youth which enables them to stay in their communities.

Moreover, numerous studies conducted in Canada and elsewhere have shown that land-based recirculating systems have very limited and uncertain operational and financial viability. Higher costs associated with infrastructure, energy and labour costs greatly compromise any benefits and threaten the long-term viability of land-based operations when faced with external shocks, such as depressed salmon values or increased costs for energy and feed. The marginal economic nature of land-based aquaculture production systems would render operators unable to compete with the lower production costs of salmon reared in net pens in Norway, Chile, Scotland and elsewhere.

The objective of the Government of Canada is to establish a rigorous regulatory regime that supports aquaculture development and protects the aquatic ecosystem. When it comes to how salmon are produced, the Government of Canada establishes environmental standards that must be met by all technologies and will not prescribe the best technological approach as that would stifle innovation. The Government of Canada's technology-neutral stance fosters the evolution of a broad spectrum of innovative technologies and approaches to fulfil the strict standards set out in robust, science-based regulations. This approach is critical in maintaining our competitiveness on international markets, preserving and expanding quality middle-class employment in Canada, and further enhancing the sustainable development of an important food-producing sector for the benefit of all Canadians.

Legislating the removal of salmon aquaculture from Canada's oceans represents an excessive approach to resolving environmental issues that are already being managed through robust, science-based federal and provincial regulations.