

2018/19 Estimates Debate

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

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Issue: Fin Fish Aquaculture – Broughton Archipelago

Recommend Response:

- Five First Nation Bands in the Broughton Archipelago and the Province have agreed to enter into a consent-based process regarding fish farm operations in that area.
- This is about respecting indigenous values and the role they should have in decision making regarding the protection of wild salmon.
- We recognize that working in this manner with indigenous partners is new and we will develop this consent based partnership in a collaborative manner.
- A consent based process does not mean our indigenous partners hold a veto on what happens to the fish farm operations in the Broughton.
- Also this consent-based process is not a substitute for operational consultation on any permit applications/renewals being sought from fish farm operators in the Broughton.
- The Province has extended an invitation for Federal officials to be part of this process as they hold substantial accountability for protection of wild salmon and their habitat in addition to regulation of the aquaculture industry.
- We also recognize it's important for the industry perspective to be heard and shared and will meaningfully engage with them throughout this process.
- The fish farm industry has signalled support for the consent based process and would like to participate and be part of solution building.
- By embarking on this process we will:
 - enhance certainty for investment in BC,
 - realize Provincial economic and environmental objectives, and
 - enable a respectful role for Indigenous peoples in addressing issues that are important to their cultural, social and economic livelihood.

Key Facts:

The BC salmon farming sector has been operating for more than three decade and operates in marine waterways near small rural and remote communities. The majority of the sector uses Atlantic salmon to harvest – a non-native species. Atlantic salmon, on average, grow faster and more efficiently than native Pacific species and have a long history of industry development. It is BC's highest valued seafood product (93,000 metric tonnes worth \$797 million in 2016) and BC's number one agricultural export. Each of the 123 fish farms on the BC coast generates on average \$6 million worth of product and provides 40 well-paying jobs. The ministry receives approximately \$2 million in annual rental fee revenues from the finfish sector.

First Nations, non-government organizations and some members of the public have long held concerns about the impact of Atlantic farmed salmon on wild Pacific salmon. These concerns include sea lice and pathogen transfers (like PRV - Piscine Reovirus) to pacific wild salmon, environmental regulations and enforcement of fish farm

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operations and broader impacts to cultural practices and environmental values. The risk the industry poses to the environment and wild salmon is polarized and debated.

Net pen finfish operations, in the Broughton Archipelago specifically, have been a focus of concern by First Nations and non-governmental organizations for some time and have intensified over the past year inclusive of demonstrations and occupations of farmed sites. The fish farms in the Broughton area contribute approximately 21% of the total production (19,149 tonnes), worth \$163.4 million wholesale value. There are approximately 1,356 jobs associated with production in the Broughton Archipelago fish farms.

On January 30th, 2018 the Province invited five bands representing six First Nations (Dzawada'eunuw, Kwikwasut'inuxw-Haxwa'mis, Gwawaenuk, 'Namgis, and Mamalilikulla) from the Broughton area to a Ministers' meeting to discuss next steps relating to ongoing disputes with fish farms in the Broughton Archipelago.

The Nations and Province agreed to move forward on a consent-based, government-to-government (G2G) process that identifies important issues and charts a path forward to reconciliation rooted in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

On January 31st, 2018, a joint public news release was issued by the province and First Nations stating that they will work together to develop and implement a consent based process that will focus on the importance of wild salmon health and sustainability; and the fish farm operations in the Broughton area.

The Province will be meeting with First Nations to follow up on commitments made and will be speaking with the Nations about how to bring in the industry and Federal Government perspectives into the dialogue.

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