



OCT 11 2016

Mr. Eddie Gardner
President
Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance
< singingbear@telus.net >

Dear Mr. Gardner:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 16 and July 17, 2016, regarding aquaculture in British Columbia and Indigenous peoples' concerns. I regret the delay in responding.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is committed to protecting the health of Canada's wild and farmed fish and takes very seriously its responsibility for the sustainability, conservation and protection of marine ecosystems and the aquatic species they support.

The Canadian aquaculture industry operates under some of the strictest regulations in the world. In British Columbia, the *Pacific Aquaculture Regulations* and the *Aquaculture Activities Regulations* set the foundation for explicit environmental management requirements, which are tailored to each aquaculture site through licence conditions. These requirements include plans for fish health management, sea lice management, and mitigation of habitat impacts and environmental effects. DFO's [Public Reporting on Aquaculture website](#) addresses these topics in detail.

Regarding your concerns about the potential diagnosis of heart and skeletal muscle inflammation in Atlantic salmon at a British Columbia fish farm, initial findings from a study undertaken as part of the Strategic Salmon Health Initiative (a collaboration among DFO, the Pacific Salmon Foundation and Genome British Columbia) were publicly shared in May 2016 and are available [online](#).

As mentioned in my [mandate letter](#), the Government of Canada is committed to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. The decision to implement multi-year licences follows extensive engagement with industry, First Nations, provincial authorities, and environmental organizations. A multi-year approach allows for long-term planning, and also supports investments in more sustainable practices. Aquaculture sites must meet their licence conditions during the full term of a multi-year licence and the Department can amend licence conditions for the conservation and protection of fish at any point during the term of the licence. Additionally, DFO's rigorous audit and monitoring program continually assesses compliance with licence conditions, and the overall operational and environmental performance of each site.

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The Department supports the adoption of closed containment aquaculture, and information related to the development of new technologies and best practices to enhance the environmental and economic sustainability of closed containment aquaculture is available on the DFO [website](#).

On June 20, 2016, I—along with the Ministers of Natural Resources, Transport, Environment and Climate Change, Science, and Indigenous and Northern Affairs—initiated reviews of environmental and regulatory processes. The reviews will include environmental assessment processes under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, the changes to the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and the *Fisheries Act*, and the modernization of the National Energy Board.

The review of the changes to the *Fisheries Act* will specifically focus on restoring lost protections and introducing modern safeguards. The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans will lead this review and will work with the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, responsible for the concurrent review of the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* (now the *Navigation Protection Act*).

More information on the reviews, and how to participate, is available on the [Review of Environmental and Regulatory Processes](#) website, which will be updated regularly to reflect the status of the reviews and related consultation activities.

At an announcement on August 9 I reiterated the Government of Canada's commitment to act on the recommendations of the Cohen Commission. A document outlining progress on the 75 Cohen Commission recommendations as well as future work is now [online](#). Consultations with First Nations and other stakeholders on the implementation of the federal government's Wild Salmon Policy will start this fall.

DFO recognizes the cultural, ecological and economic importance of salmon in British Columbia. The Department will continue to conserve and protect salmon stocks for current and future generations.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. LeBlanc', written in a cursive style.

Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard