



A short-sighted vision for BC’s food security by restricting salmon aquaculture: “profound sadness” expressed.

ABBOTSFORD, BC – June 19, 2024: Today, the federal government announced a 5-year period for British Columbia salmon farmers to fully transition from open net-pen farming to land-based or marine closed containment.

“While this announcement was meant to provide a “responsible, realistic, and achievable” way forward, as the federal government had promised, we believe that any responsible plan must include measures to protect food affordability and security, jobs, and the health of families and communities, including Indigenous Peoples who have a right to choose to have salmon farming in their traditional territories,” said BCAC President, Jennifer Woike.

“British Columbians have clearly indicated that their top issues of concern are access to affordable housing and food, as well as access to quality healthcare, not the closure of any food-producing industries,” noted Woike. “Any further reduction in the supply of domestically raised salmon amid an already constrained global supply will increase prices for Canadians on one of their preferred sources of protein.”

BCAC Executive Director, Danielle Synotte commented that, “British Columbians, as well as many other Canadians, are also very concerned about inflation and job security. The B.C. salmon sector has already been reduced by about 40% since 2020.”

“Small coastal communities have borne the brunt of these job reductions, and they can ill afford to see further employment opportunities lost because of the short-term renewal of salmon licenses. Many thousands of jobs in remote and Indigenous communities in B.C. rely upon a strong salmon sector and a predictable environment for investment,” said Synotte.

Salmon farming is highly regulated in Canada. It has also reached a historic milestone, whereby 100% of the remaining farm production is under agreement with local rights-holder First Nations. “This should be an achievement that all governments celebrate,” advises Woike.

The response by the First Nations for FinFish Stewardship spokespersons shared today how this decision felt like a step backwards towards their economic empowerment. Synotte adds, “Our future, and the responsible path forward, cannot include the further reduction of any B.C. food production sectors.”

BCAC will continue to be a strong advocate for our province’s food sovereignty as we learn more in the coming weeks.

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