



STATEMENT RE: FEDERAL RESPONSE TO COHEN RECOMMENDATIONS

For Immediate Release

August 9, 2016

CAMPBELL RIVER, B.C. – In an update provided today at the DFO West Vancouver Laboratory Centre for Aquarium and Environmental Research, Minister Dominic LeBlanc shared the progress Fisheries and Oceans Canada has made on the Cohen recommendations since they were released in October 2012, and provided a pathway for their future science-based approach to protecting wild Pacific salmon.

“The recommendations are about protecting wild salmon, which is important to all British Columbians,” said Jeremy Dunn, Executive Director of the BC Salmon Farmers Association. “Salmon farmers have supported Justice Cohen’s plan from the day it was released, and our members are pleased to see the government’s acknowledgement of the work that has been done on implementing the recommendations, and that DFO will be continuing to move its spirit forward.”

Salmon farming in B.C. has seen significant advancements since the recommendations were released in 2012, most notably in the area of third-party environmental certification. Today, every BCSFA member farm has at least one audited certification, and many have achieved multiple standards. Not only is B.C. home to North America’s only producer of Certified Organic Chinook salmon, but also every farm raising Atlantic salmon is certified to the Global Aquaculture Alliance’s Best Aquaculture Practices certification, and those companies are all committed to being certified to the Aquaculture Stewardship Council’s salmon standard by 2020.

“Our farmers are achieving the most stringent global standards at a rate that is as fast, or faster, than any region in the world,” said Dunn.

B.C. salmon farmers have advanced practices in many areas, most notably as a catalyst for collaborative research through the creation of the Marine Environmental Research Program. The \$1.5-Million fund administered by an independent Science Advisory Council has provided funding to six projects to date and will hold a call for proposals this December. Salmon farmers have also worked to increase the transparency of their operations, publishing information on key environmental indicators on a regular basis and summarized through an annual Sustainability Progress Report.

The Cohen Commission report emphasized that there was no single cause of the poor 2009 return of Fraser River Sockeye, but did draw attention to possible influences such as warming water temperatures, fisheries management, hatchery work and more. He recommended more research be done regarding salmon farm production, particularly in the Discovery Islands area.

Farm-raised salmon is B.C.’s highest valued agricultural export, accounts for more than 5,000 jobs, and has a total economic impact of \$1.1 billion. Salmon farmers are working closely with coastal First Nations and have 20 economic impact benefit agreements in place, accounting for 78% of all salmon raised in B.C.

For more information visit BCSalmonFarmers.ca

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