

Positive Aquaculture Awareness

NEWS RELEASE

‘Fishy Business’ report “Smells to High Heaven:” SPAA

For Immediate Release:

Campbell River, July 17, 2003 – A report funded by environmental activists, big labour and VanCity Credit Union is the latest in a steady stream of skewed facts and plain old misinformation against BC aquaculture, says the leader of a grassroots group committed to providing the public with better information about BC’s salmon farming sector.

“The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) has produced a typical anti-fishfarm report – as you’d expect of the one-trick activists Coastal Alliance of Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) who commissioned it,” said Positive Aquaculture Awareness President Laurie Jensen.

“But the shoddy workmanship and skewed facts of the report are way beneath VanCity Credit Union, listed as a funder. You’d think VanCity would be interested in sustainable jobs now and into the future. But the activist report they’ve helped produce – entitled Fishy Business – is what is truly fishy.”

In setting up a false dichotomy between salmon farming and the wild fishery, the report claims the wild fishery is far more valuable in terms of economics and jobs. In fact a fair comparison would show both industries are similar in terms of production, at \$360 million of landed value for wild fish, and \$286 million for aquaculture, of which salmon is \$269 million, Jensen said.

“But the most glaring omission in the report is that the landed value of wild salmon – as opposed to the value of the total wild fishery - is worth only \$33 million. In other words, the farmgate value of farmed salmon is eight times the landed value of wild salmon.

“But the fact remains there is no dichotomy. Both industries can and do live side by side in this province – and have done for 20 years. CAAR top-flight donor the David Suzuki Foundation knows that all too well, and continues to work at driving a wedge between the two industries. We in the communities are simply tired of it.”

The report, which argues for a moratorium on salmon farming, is entirely political in nature, Jensen argues. “CAAR and policy Alternatives are basically proposing a job-killing strategy that reminds me very much of the previous provincial government’s approach,” Jensen said.

“It is definitely inappropriate behavior for VanCity to enable this slanted research, and it seems beneath the BC Federation of Labour as well. Fishermen are our colleagues, our neighbors and our friends. We in the Coastal Communities have great challenges to face, and we need to work together on them.

Jensen noted that one of the reasons a sustainable wild salmon fishery is possible in BC is because salmon aquaculture helps take the pressure off wild stocks. “Salmon aquaculture and the wild salmon fishery can thrive together in this province,” she said.

“And we must not let political interest groups like the CCPA get in the way of that,” Jensen said.

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BACKGROUND FACTS ABOUT BC’S SALMON AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY

- BC’s aquaculture industry, of which salmon farming makes up by far the largest component, has outperformed every other sector in the BC economy in terms of GDP growth. Even the high-tech sector, one of BC’s fastest growing, is no match for aquaculture. Since 1984, the high-tech sector (computer peripherals) has grown 684 per cent compared to the 4,907 per cent increase in aquaculture.
- Salmon aquaculture is the fastest growing part of the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Between 1984 and 2001, GDP in the salmon farming industry rose from \$0.2 million to \$105 million.
- Salmon aquaculture is BC’s largest agricultural export commodity, with annual exports valued at over \$270 million.
- Salmon aquaculture creates long-term, well-paying jobs particularly in BC coastal communities and First Nations communities where other forms of employment have diminished greatly. The industry, to date, has created over 4000 direct and indirect jobs.
- 90% of jobs created in salmon aquaculture are outside Vancouver and Victoria
- Salmon aquaculture is the largest employer in several BC coastal communities, including Port Hardy and Central Coast First Nations community of Klemtu.