

GROUPS CONDEMN PROVINCE'S FAILURE TO ACT ON AQUACULTURE SOLUTIONS

Absence of closed containment funding missed opportunity in Budget 2009

For immediate release

Victoria, February 17, 2009: The Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) today slammed the BC government for once again failing to invest in the development of a new, green technology industry that would address the numerous devastating impacts of open net-cage salmon farming in coastal waters while creating jobs for the new economy.

“When the economy was booming, the Province buried their heads in the sand and denied salmon farming practices were a problem,” said Ruby Berry of the Georgia Strait Alliance. “Now that they can no longer ignore the weight of scientific evidence proving the farms are killing our wild salmon, they are going to use the economic downturn as an excuse to avoid action. The survival of BC’s wild salmon should be a priority to the Campbell government as it is to the voters.”

The seven environmental group members of CAAR have been rallying support for a budget allocation to closed containment development. Over twenty retail food businesses have written to the Province backing the call for change, and ten local and regional governments and Chambers of Commerce in BC have passed resolutions in support of the solutions funding. Marine Harvest Canada joined CAAR in a request to the Province for the new technology fund.

The bi-lateral Finance Committee recommended funding in Budget 2009 for closed containment aquaculture systems, and the recently-released Pacific Salmon Forum report strongly urged the Province to allocate the money and get on with developing closed system projects. Polls show a strong majority of British Columbia voters want investment in this new technology. Yet the Province has again failed to act.

“CAAR has been actively seeking a solution that would allow salmon aquaculture to continue to operate in BC while addressing the significant impacts the industry’s current practices are having on our oceans and wild salmon stocks,” said Catherine Stewart of Living Oceans Society. “If neither government nor industry is willing to invest in the development of closed containment, the only hope for saving wild salmon from the impacts of open net-cages may ultimately be the closure of farms.”

For more information contact:

Ruby Berry, Georgia Strait Alliance: 250-218-6818 (attending the Budget lock-up)

Catherine Stewart, Living Oceans Society: 604-916-6722

Jay Ritchlin, David Suzuki Foundation: 604-732-4228

.

David Suzuki Foundation • Friends of Clayoquot Sound • Georgia Strait Alliance • Living Oceans Society •
Raincoast Conservation Society • T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation • Watershed Watch Salmon Society

www.FarmedandDangerous.org