

Environmental Petition

Contact information:

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I hereby submit this petition to the Auditor General of Canada under section 22 of the Auditor General Act.

Signature of petitioner: _____

Date:

Title of Petition: DFO Response to the Cohen Commission Report into the Decline of Fraser River Sockeye, BC.

Background Information:

The Government of Canada spent \$26.4 Million on, supplied 500,000 documents to and 3.3 million pages of text were reviewed by the Cohen Commission which then wrote and submitted an unprecedented 1,200 page document with 75 recommendations of scheduled times, funding and resources required to bring back Fraser River Sockeye in BC. After a year of no response from DFO, I wrote the following article on the Cohen Commission Report for the Times Colonist Newspaper, BC on October 16, 2013:

Cohen Commission One Year Later

You may have thought the Cohen report was a stone dropped through DFO leaving not a ripple. You'd be right. Google DFO Cohen Commission and what you find is everyone else in the country commenting loudly but nothing from DFO. Go directly to DFO and search, and the result is virtually the same. Page after page of nothing about the Commission – a year of silence so far.

At the time, DFO swamped the Commission with 500,000 documents. But after Cohen completed the intended sessions, the first result for the Atlantic Ocean fish farm disease ISA was demonstrated in two wild sockeye fry from Owikeno Lake, Rivers Inlet. Then one contentious document DFO failed to give Cohen was leaked: a study showing ISA in dozens of wild BC salmon, co-authored by Molly Kibenge, then with DFO in Nanaimo.

Cohen reopened the hearings and the full extent of fish farm diseases cascaded out. The science experts K. Miller, F. Kibenge and A. Nylund were interviewed. Miller's work noted literally hundreds of thousands of fish with ISA and HSMI in Clayoquot Sound farmed chinook and SLV phenotype 'viral signature' back to 1988 in Fraser sockeye. Today there are only 501 wild chinook in Clayoquot and up to 90% of some Fraser sockeye subcomponents die of pre-spawn mortality.

With this knowledge in hand, the focus of the most important recommendations in the 1,200 page tome – 75 in total, pages 105 – 115, Volume 3 – came to centre on constraining and removing Discovery Island fish farms near Campbell River, and for DFO to relinquish its

conflicting role of supporting fish farms and put its full effort into implementing the 2005 Wild Salmon Policy, and the 1986 Habitat Policy. The report says there should be a new western director general charged with bringing back Fraser sockeye:

http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/pdf/FinalReport/CohenCommissionFinalReport_Vol03_02.pdf#zoom=100.

Since then, the CFIA started a perfunctory job of looking at a few thousand fish, and saying it could not find ISA – this after Cohen testimony discredited its lab as not being able to find ISA. And DFO? It's moved on to aquaculture. The performance measure, wait for it, is: A transparent regulatory regime for aquaculture in British Columbia and an Integrated Management Plan for finfish, and shellfish, by March 2014.

And the latest Norwegian related fish disease has just been shown to be present in BC wild salmon – PRV in Virology Journal, 2013. This may be worse than ISA, as it is the virus associated with heart and skeletal muscle inflammation – HSMI, developed circa 1999 in Norway. This is what those yellow pink salmon and the dying pre-spawn Fraser chum and sockeye are now being shown to have. Sadly, a large pre-spawn sockeye die-off occurred for the first time in the Skeena River in the past couple of months.

You can support the cost of testing all these fish, as hundreds of BC citizens, including me, are doing, on Alex Morton's blog. She has this to say: "The Commission changed my life, I am tracking three European viruses, publishing on them in top scientific journals and informing the scientific community. Government is increasingly lagging behind and irrelevant to the science on salmon."

I understand that Miller and B. Riddell (CEO of the Pacific Salmon Foundation), good smart people, will be co-authoring a report on fish farm/wild diseases. Unfortunately, for them and us, fish farms, DFO, and CFIA will be parsing the news releases.

Further Background:

The Cohen Commission changed most everything about fish farms in BC as it was the rare occasion that recorded evidentiary evidence that no one, not DFO, not CFIA, not the BC testing system, nor the myriad conflicts of interest they and scientists have with fish farms, can disavow. There is only one future for the environmentally damaging and technologically-dated fish farms – to get out of the water and move to closed-containment recirculating systems on land. If they don't like it they can go back to Norway because the costs of this industry far out strip the revenue and employment produced.

Fish Farms impede sustainable development. My rough calculations show that only the one cost of sewage treatment for these farms exceeds a staggering \$11 Billion – and that is only one cost

the BC public shoulders – against a total revenue of \$469 Million and a tiny \$61.9 Million in Gross Provincial Product (BC Stats Report URL below). The sustainable development is in the other three fishing sectors. In addition, there is the value for eco-tourism lost through killing of wild salmon. Not to mention the animals, though I am not aware what the value of a dead grizzly bear, or eagle is, for instance. For sea lions it is \$1,538 each. The figure can be calculated from the \$100,000 fine that Skuna Bay fish farm had to pay for drowning 65 sea lions in its nets. Up to 2011, fish farms have killed an estimated 11,469 sea lions and other pinnipeds in BC.

Eliminating fish farms from BC's Pacific Ocean, will increase the other three fishing sectors, the commercial sector being the one that has taken the largest hit from fish farms by their reducing local fish stocks by 50%. (3). This could result in a doubling of commercial sector employment and revenue. Note: fish farm jobs are not new jobs. They represent eliminated jobs suffered by the other three fishing sectors, particularly commercial and processing.

The Aquaculture sector (much broader than simply fish farms) comprises only 9.3% of BC Gross Provincial Product attributable to the four fishing sectors. The other three sectors comprise 90.7%. The actual fish farm employment stats for 2011 was a very low 840 actual jobs (they mistakenly released them, and I gathered up the figures and references and they are maintained on my files). Commercial sector jobs lost are 1,400 alone, when 50% loss of wild salmon stocks are accounted for. Then there are losses in the processing sector and sport sector.

DFO paid BC Stats to come up with the current figures on the fishing sectors: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/BusinessIndustry/FisheriesAquacultureHuntingTrapping.aspx>, but then failed to take them into account and have not reported any relationship, other than its name being on the cover. Why? Because the real BC Stats fish farm figures are way lower than the ones from industry and DFO. For example, the fish farm number for employment and revenue is: 6,000 jobs and \$800 million revenue. As calculated above, any industry employment number can be divided by 7.3 to arrive at the actual number of jobs; and revenue figures by 2.

Also note that fish farm employment drops over time as they introduce lights and feeding machines so workers are not required. There is also the added, as yet unvalued loss, of herring and salmonid stocks that are attracted into fish farm nets at nights under the lights. They get eaten; they get diseases and die.

Fish farms eliminate sustainable development in the BC coastal region and need to be removed from the ocean as the disease hearings portion of the Cohen Commission made clear.

After Morton vs DFO, Judge Christopher Hinkson concluded in his February 2009 ruling that BC fish farms fall under federal jurisdiction. The province of BC retains only site licences, which it can revoke in 60 days. The Cohen Report is the most important environmental document regarding the outcomes for wild BC salmon for more than two decades since the Pearse report.

Petition questions and/or requests:

Dear DFO Minister Gail Shea:

- 1. It is one year since the \$26.4 Million Cohen Commission on Decline of Fraser River Sockeye delivered its report to DFO. One year later, I would like to know: What concrete results, and detail them individually, with associated timelines and funding that DFO has committed or expensed to resolve each of the 75 environmental recommendations in the three volume Cohen Report on the Decline of Fraser River Sockeye: <http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/FinalReport/>. The recommendations are pages 105 – 115, of Volume 3. I am speaking of the boldfaced recommendations and the concrete results DFO has taken to achieve each of the 75 recommendations that can also be found in a Cohen PDF of Chapter 2, Volume Three.**

Thank you

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1. References for the Times Colonist article:

DFO's aquaculture initiative: The British Columbia Aquaculture Program: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/rpp/2013-14/SO1/so-rs-1.3.2-eng.html>

Alex M's blog: http://alexandramorton.typepad.com/alexandra_morton/2013/10/tracking-viruses-2013.html.

Three volume Cohen report: <http://www.cohencommission.ca/en/FinalReport/>.

DFO regarding BC Aquaculture: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/rpp/2013-14/SO1/so-rs-1.3.2-eng.html>. Sub-program 1.3.2 - British Columbia Aquaculture Program Performance Measure. By March 2014: A transparent regulatory regime for aquaculture in British Columbia and an Integrated Management Plan for finfish, and shellfish.

The PRV paper: <http://www.virologyj.com/content/10/1/230>

Whole-genome analysis of piscine reovirus (PRV) shows PRV represents a new genus in family *Reoviridae* and its genome segment S1 sequences group it into two separate sub-genotypes

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Miller Summary on Watershed Watch: <http://www.watershed-watch.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Exh-1523-CAN006145.pdf>

2. Reference for BC Stats Report: BC Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector, 2012 Edition

Fish, Processing, Sport Fishing and Aquaculture Stats - Figures in Millions (and 2002 constant dollars, except for 2011 Revenue)

	Commercial	Processing	Sport	Aquaculture	Total
Contribution to GDP, and %	\$102.3 (15.3%)	\$177.5 (26.6)	\$325.7 (48.8%)	\$61.9 (9.3%)	\$667.4 100%
% GDP					0.4%
Employment (% of total)	1,400 (10.1%)	2,400 (17.3%)	8,400 (60.4%)	1,700 (12.2%)	13,900 100%
Wages and Salaries % of Total	\$78.4* \$8.4 2.2%	\$105.3 \$105.3 27.5%	\$218.9 \$218.9 57.1%	\$55.7 \$55.7 14.5%	- \$383.3 100%
Total 2011 Revenue (increase/decrease)	\$344.8 (+4.1%)	\$427.5 (+2.1%)	\$936.5 (+0.8%)	\$469.0 (-12.2%)	\$2,177.8
Revenue % of Total	15.8%	19.6%	43.0%	21.5%	100%

*Do note that Commercial employment and income is some \$70 million higher than included in this table at \$8.4 M because most fishermen are self-employed and technically this renders them not employees.

3. Reference for fish farms reduce local wild fish stocks by 50%:

<http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pbio.0060033>